# What Think You of Christ?

AN

HISTORICAL INQUIRY INTO CHRIST'S GODHEAD.

BY

BERNARD J. OTTEN, S. J.

Professor of Theology in St. Louis University.

---

ST. LOUIS, MO., 1909

PUBLISHED BY B. HERDER

17 SOUTH BROADWAY

FREIBURG (BADEN) B. HERDER | LONDON & EDINBURGH SANDS & CO.

Class BT 215

Book .08

Copyright No.

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT

# What Think You of Christ?

AN

HISTORICAL INQUIRY INTO CHRIST'S GODHEAD.

BY

BERNARD J. OTTEN, S. J.

Professor of Theology in St. Louis University.

---

ST. LOUIS, MO., 1909

PUBLISHED BY B. HERDER

17 SOUTH BROADWAY

FREIBURG (BADEN) B. HERDER | LONDON & EDINBURGH SANDS & CO.

BT215
.08

Nihil obstat.

R. J. Meyer, S. J.
Provincial.

Die 6 Julii, 1909.

Nihil obstat.

St. Louis, die 12 Julii, 1909.
Josephus Wentker,
Censor.

Imprimatur.

St. Louis, die 12 Julii, 1909.

† Joannes J. Glennon,
Archiepiscopus.

Copyright, 1909, by Joseph Gummersbach.

©Sep.23.1909
CL. A 248059
SEP 27 1909

MVG 2037.

## CONTENTS

What Think You of Christ? ..... 1
The Christ of the Synoptics ..... 22
The Christ of St. Paul ..... 50
The Word Incarnate ..... 73
Historic Basis of St. John's Faith ..... 96
The Christ of the Early Church ..... 120
Christ the Light of the World ..... 142

## PREFACE.

The purpose of this little treatise is to place before believing Christians, both Catholics and Protestants, the chief historical reasons which underlie our faith in Christ's Godhead. The Rationalistic tendencies of the day, especially as disguised under the garb of Modernism, seem to need a counterpoise even in the minds of such as stand in no immediate danger of being led astray by recent speculations concerning the personality of our Blessed Saviour. Specious argumentation and bold statements, if oft repeated and put forward in a plausible way, are calculated to exert an influence even where faith is strong, and unless this influence be counteracted in due time, more harm may come of it than well-meaning but over-trustful persons are likely to suspect.

It is to this thought that the discussions in the present treatise owe their somewhat unusual form. To the believing Christian the Divinity of Christ may be proved much more effectively by emphasizing the supernatural element in His earthly career, but as that element is summarily set aside by

the adversaries with whom we have to deal, it has lost much of its value as a weapon of defense in the present controversy. Hence, as the reader will notice, in the following pages little or nothing is said about miracles or other supernatural manifestations; but the whole argumentation turns about certain points of history, which Modernists and Rationalists alike deem of prime importance in deciding the point at issue. The reason for this, as already intimated, is not to be looked for in the writer's own view of the matter, but rather in the position taken by the men whose influence this little treatise is intended to counteract. They have chosen the weapons, and if we wish to oppose them successfully, we must use weapons of a like kind.

In reality, therefore, the following pages contain an answer to the various Rationalistic contentions, whose one aim is to reduce Christ to the level of a purely human being. However, in order to keep the discussion within reasonable limits, the polemical element has been relegated more or less to the back-ground, only such passing references being made to our adversaries' views as were deemed necessary to give point to the arguments or to put the question under discussion in a clearer light. Possibly this may be regarded as a defect,

but if so, it is the writer's opinion that defects of this kind are more than counterbalanced by the resulting unity, which the elimination of all formal controversy has made possible.

# What Think You of Christ?

In the twenty-second chapter of his Gospel, St. Matthew relates how on a certain occasion the Pharisees gathered around our Blessed Saviour for the purpose of ensnaring Him in His speech, so that they might have cause to accuse Him before the magistrates. One of them, a doctor of the law, asked Him the question: "Master, which is the great commandment of the law?" Jesus answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets" (35-40). The first part of this answer was but a statement of the law promulgated by Moses, as recorded in Deuteronomy (VI, 5); but the second part, at least in the sense in which it was taken by our Blessed Saviour, was a new commandment, which He imposed upon all by His own supreme authority. For of old it had been said: "Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself" (Lev. XIX,

18), thus tacitly excluding enemies and strangers from the law of neighbourly love; but Christ broadened out this law so as to make it comprise all men without distinction, even such as had given cause for enmity. In this He but reiterated His teaching on a former occasion, when He said: "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust" (Matt. V. 43-45). It was therefore a new commandment, and as such it postulated in Him supreme legislative authority.

Having thus called the attention of His hearers to His singular position in regard to the law, He asked them in return: "What think you of Christ? whose son is he? They say to him: David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that

day forth ask him any more questions" Matt. XXII, 42-46). Christ thus offered His adversaries an opportunity to acknowledge the divine personality of the promised Messiah, whom they all understood to be David's son, although David had called Him Lord, and had represented Him as sitting on the throne of God. Had they been of good will and sincere purpose, they could hardly have failed to answer Christ's second question as readily as the first. "If then David call him Lord, how is he his son?" Why, He is David's son, because according to the flesh He is to be a descendant of the house of David; and David calls Him Lord, because according to His higher nature He is to be the Son of God, being "over all things God blessed forever." It was because they had allowed themselves to be blinded by worldly ambition that they failed to perceive the true import of the prophecies recorded in their Sacred Books, and thus blinded they saw no way out of the difficulty, so that their only answer was an incredulous silence.

Now this question of our Blessed Saviour, "What think you of Christ?" I would like to ask you, Christian men and women, who, it may be reasonably supposed, are deeply interested in all that con-

cerns His personality. What think you of Christ? What think you of Him, not as Christians, not as His faithful disciples; but merely as reasonable men and women, who have impartially weighed the evidence put forth in His behalf? Do you believe, as did the Pharisees of old, that He is but David's son? or do you admit the further statement that he is also David's Lord? that He is the Son of God—a God Incarnate?

Christ has stood before the world as God's own Son, consubstantial with the Father, ever since He rose in triumph from the grave. His divine Sonship has been the leaven that changed corrupt humanity in its inmost being. The effulgence of His Godhead purified the corruption of pagan Greece and Rome, and slowly but surely gathered around the altar of the Cross the noblest and the best of every nation on the face of the earth. If the greater part of the civilized world is Christian today, it is because the Christ that was preached by the Apostles and their successors presented Himself not as a mere man, but as the one true God, before whom every knee must bend in humble adoration. In the days of old, during His earthly pilgrimage, He proved His divinity by calling the dead from their graves, and sending the stream of life through limbs

that had long since been wasted by disease; later on when He had been raised on high, He wrought in the full light of day, in the sight of all the people, the far more stupendous miracle of calling into life entire nations, who had sat for ages in the darkness of sin and in the shadows of spiritual death. It is to His Godhead, and not to His humanity, that the world owes all that is noblest and best in Christian civilization. And yet in spite of all this, in spite of the most convincing proofs that Christ is in very deed the Son of the Most High, men shrink from professing Him to be their God and content themselves like the Jews of old, with calling Him a great prophet.

It is a sad fact that the number of those who repudiate Christ's title to a strictly divine sonship is increasing day by day. Their ranks are augmented not only from the different Protestant denominations, but also from the Church that has always stood in the forefront of our Blessed Saviour's defenders against the attacks of Rationalism. Men's highest ambition, as exemplified in much that goes by the name of modern scholarship, reaches out to a position of intellectual independence that will not brook in the world of phenomena, the presence of a being, whose perfections

cannot be measured by human standards of excellence. That childlike attitude of heart and mind, which receives without questioning God's revelation to man, is fast making room for a critical incredulity, which in the end must lead to absolute skepticism in matters of faith. It is a position as false in principle as it is unreasonable in fact. A careful sifting of the evidence, which shows the reasonableness of faith in Christ's divinity, is indeed quite legitimate:—nay, it is even necessary in order to render God a reasonable service; but to reject this evidence, when it is found to square with all the canons of sound criticism, is as uncritical as it is un-Christian. Yet this is the common practice of an ever growing multitude of modern scholars, who point to themselves as leaders of Christian thought, and who glory in the claim that they have succeeded in placing Christianity upon a scientific basis. Objective evidence points indeed with unmistakable clearness to Christ's divine personality; but because the personal union of the human and the divine cannot be fathomed by human intelligence, hence the evidence itself must be explained away. That this procedure is most illogical, no one can fail to see: because in the last instance it transfers the limitations of the human intellect to the

very being of God, who is supposed to be incapable of accomplishing what man's reason cannot understand. It is a manifestation of intellectual pride that is of its very nature irreconcilable with the spirit of faith; and hence it is no wonder that such men should content themselves with acknowledging in Christ but a mere man, even though Christianity has always adored Him as its God.

It is this spirit of uncritical criticism that the Supreme Pontiff has lately condemned in his Encyclical against Modernism. The secular, and to some extent also the non-Catholic religious press has been loud in condemning that famous document as another evidence of Rome's traditional opposition to all progress; but to the thoughtful and Christian mind, whether Catholic or Protestant, it has brought a much needed reassurance in the conflict with error and falsehood, which threaten to exile Christ from the world redeemed by the outpouring of His blood. No censure has been passed upon modern learning, simply because it is modern or progressive; on the contrary, in so far as it is sound and sincere, it has been duly appreciated and highly praised: nor yet have modern methods been condemned indiscriminately, for in many respects these methods are ac-

knowledged to yield excellent results, and they are in fact extensively used by the foremost champions of the faith; but what has been made an object of censure and what has been condemned in the strongest terms, are the unwarranted assumptions that many modern critics put forward as so many well established axioms which, according to them, admit of no discussion, and which, if logically applied, must necessarily lead to the subversion of all historic truth. To assume without proof that we cannot be certain of anything that lies beyond the ken of our senses and then to use that assumption as an argument against the historical foundation of the Christian faith, is not the outcome of learning and scholarship, but the result of deep-rooted prejudice against the supernatural:—it is intellectual suicide; and as such it is deserving of the most unqualified condemnation. Yet this is the sum and substance of Modernism and this is the chief reason why it has been condemned by the Sovereign Pontiff. Modernists take it for granted that, aside from each one's individual consciousness, we cannot prove Christ's divine personality; they take it for granted that we cannot prove the fact of revelation; they take it for granted that we cannot prove the establishment of the Church and

the institution of the Sacraments:—and after assuming all this without proof, after simply taking it for granted, they coolly demand that historic Christianity be discarded as something that has outlived its usefulness, and that henceforth each one be his own prophet and counselor, following as best he may the example of the Man Christ whose human life and work point the way to union with God. Surely, if such doctrines may go uncensured, if such teaching may stand uncondemned, Christianity has ceased to exist, and human reason itself has signed its own death warrant.

It is true, these men claim to be loyal Catholics; they profess the greatest reverence for Christ and express the highest appreciation of His work: but it must not be overlooked that their Catholicism is of their own invention, and that the Christ, whom they profess to revere and follow, is the very antithesis of the Christ preached by the Apostles and the first disciples. The Catholic Church, as they conceive it, is a pure democracy, in which all final authority resides in the individual conscience, and not in a supreme ruler who holds the place of Christ. Hence in matters of faith, the court of final appeal is each one's private judgment, which should indeed be in harmony with the mind of the Church, but

with which no Ecclesiastical authority has a right to interfere. They are willing to admit a teaching authority, but only in so far as that authority voices the opinion of individual Church members and acknowledges its dependence upon popular ideals. A loyal Catholic therefore, as they understand and use the term, is one who professes at all times a profound respect for authority, but who knows so to interpret that authority as to be able to follow without hindrance his own judgment. This is Protestantism pure and simple, except that it tries to hide its interior opposition to authority under the thin guise of exterior submission.

Equally un-Catholic is their view of Christ. They do not openly and absolutely deny His divinity, as do their Rationalistic prototypes, but they contend that His divine personality cannot be proved from any historical data. If in His action upon the human soul He manifests Himself as divine, His Godhead becomes an object of faith to the particular individual in question; but in as far as He is an historical personage, He is merely human. Science and history, they say, encounter nothing in Him that is not contained within the range of purely human perfection. Hence they distinguish between the Christ of faith

and the Christ of history. The former is indeed divine, because He is experienced as such by the religious consciousness of His followers; the latter is merely human, because science and history can accept only what falls under the observation of the senses and as such is circumscribed by finite limits. Consequently the Christ that is presented to us in historical records, when stripped of all that faith has attributed to Him, is different from other mortals only in the more striking perfection of His character and in His closer union with God. As these Modernists put it, "He was a man of choicest nature, whose like has never been, nor ever will be."

It would be timely indeed to subject these various contentions of Modernists to a close study, so that their unwarranted assumptions and glaring contradictions might be placed in their true light; but as that would lead us over the entire field of philosophy and theology, and consequently would be too vast a subject to be adequately treated in a few chapters, it seems more profitable to confine our attention to one point which, if not the most fundamental, is certainly the most pernicious error of their entire system. This is their teaching concerning Christ, as just now

explained. It does not, however, seem advisable to treat the matter from a strictly polemical or controversial standpoint, but rather to take the available data at their own merit; because the best refutation of error is always contained in a clear presentation of the truth. Hence in the following pages we shall endeavor to answer our Lord's question, "What think you of Christ?" as guided by the light of historical evidence, without allowing ourselves to be influenced by that mysterious religious sense to which Modernists attribute the time-honored belief in Christ's divinity.

As is quite manifest, most of the evidence upon which we must rely in formulating our answer to Modernists, is contained in the New Testament, which records Christ's deeds and sayings as witnessed by His disciples during His sojourn upon earth. Modernists tell us indeed that the New Testament, in as far as it contains real history, has nothing to say in favor of Christ's divinity; but whether that contention be true or false, we shall have abundant occasion to learn in the course of these discussions. And here it is well to bear in mind that there is no need whatever of first proving the historical value of these New Testament writings; for in practice Modernists, and Rationalists as well,

admit this, in as much as they freely use these same writings as a source of information concerning the personality of Christ. It is true, they reject whatever might be used as an argument to prove His divinity; but as we shall see, the divinity of Christ is so interwoven with the whole narrative that it can in no wise be set aside, except by sacrifi ing the entire New Testament, which even the most radical critics are unwilling to do.

On this point it might be well to give the view of a modern writer who is not a Catholic, and who has carefully weighed all the evidence advanced by the most hostile critics against the trustworthiness of the Gospel narrative. In an article on the character of Christ, as represented in the four Gospels, he says: "For the study in which we are to be engaged two positions are essential, which may be stated here as assumptions, though they are in reality conclusions of the study itself. The first is the trustworthiness of the Gospels as portraitures of Christ. Grant the ordinary critical results, that the Gospels were written late in the first century, that contemporary ideas and experiences have influenced their authors or editors, that in some cases the Evangelists have misunderstood or misrepresented their

Master; yet the fact remains, that the character of Christ, as represented in these documents, was not, and could not have been an invention or a fiction, a product of progressive meditation or a creation of enthusiastic feeling. Do justice to the portrait of Christ, let its harmony and uniqueness, its profound naturalness and its transcendent loveliness, make their due impression, and the conclusion presses, that the Christ of the Gospels is not a construction but a memory, an actual figure, once beheld by eyes of flesh, and now discerned through a medium upon which contemporary influences have had no distorting effect, and which, accordingly permits Him to be known as He was."

"The second assumption follows naturally upon the first, and maintains the sufficiency of the Gospels for the knowledge of Christ. It is obvious that they do not aim at extensive completeness. They are not chronicles; nor are they biographies in the modern sense. A shorthand report of the sayings of Jesus, a minute record of His life, during even the short period covered by the narratives, would have swelled their brief outlines to portentous volumes. It is certain that they do aim at intensive or central completeness. We do not need to know everything about a man in order to know

him. For the purpose of character study, much that is interesting, that affectionate curiosity would like to know, is needless or irrelevant. The materials of our study must be, and need only be, such words and deeds as express the whole man, and are the organic utterance and outcome of his very self. This is one aspect of the uniqueness of the Gospels, one element in the proof that they are memorials, not inventions, that the Christ they represent is a unity. There is not the faintest trace of artificiality, of an ingenious synthesis of heterogeneous elements. No portrait painter, no artist in words, ever invented a figure of such perfect harmony. There are many things about Christ we should like to know; but such things have been told as enable us to know Christ. From the Gospels we learn enough to know what manner of man He was. And if He be alive and able to influence persons now living on this earth, it is certain that His communications will be simply the unfolding and the application of the character which was expressed in such words and deeds as the Gospels record" (Kilpatrick, Character of Christ, D. C. G. I, p. 282).

In this view of the matter there are some things to which I would not care to subscribe: as, for instance, the contention that

the "Gospels were written late in the first century," that "contemporary ideas and experiences have influenced their authors or editors," and that "in some cases the Evangelists have misunderstood or misinterpreted their Master;" but waiving all this for the present, the undoubted fact remains that even such critics as are unwilling to admit Christ's divine personality, or for that matter anything that savors of the supernatural, must and do admit that the Gospels contain a correct historical portraiture of Christ. This is all we need: for as already stated, our arguments and conclusions will not be based upon isolated passages, which might possibly be called in question, but upon the entire Gospel narrative. If the Gospels can at all be considered as historical documents, then the incarnation of the Son of God must be admitted as an historic fact; then it is historically certain that Christ was God.

Nor must it be imagined that the conclusion, which I have quoted at some length, is that of a particular individual, who is more or less favorably disposed towards the orthodox teaching concerning Christ's divine personality; in its broad outlines it is freely conceded even by the most advanced critics. Leaving aside the question of His divinity, they are all most eloquent in their

eulogies of the historic Christ, whose unequalled character they find delineated in the Gospel narrative. It never enters their minds to question the trustworthiness of the Gospels, when the point at issue is limited to Christ's human perfection. They become skeptical only where the Evangelists record such words or deeds as necessarily imply that Christ was a divine person. Then they apply the arbitrarily established canon of higher criticism, according to which nothing must be admitted as historical, except it be contained within the limits of the purely natural. This is indeed quite an absurd proceeding; but it is the only way open to them. As the infidel Renan well put it: "If miracles and revelation be possible, then our position is extremely foolish. For in that case the divinity of Christ is so well attested, that only a fool could ever dream of denying it." Hence they hold fast to their fundamental principle, that within the borders of Nature's kingdom there is no room for the supernatural—there is no room for God. God's place is in heaven, and there He must stay, whatever Prophets and Evangelists and Theologians may say to the contrary.

On another occasion I have shown at considerable length, how this summary rejection of all that is supernatural, whether it

be miracles or revelation, is directly opposed to sound reason. It is not necessary to repeat these arguments now, as in the following discussions we shall not base our reasoning upon any miraculous occurrences narrated in the Gospels. Still, it is but right to bear in mind that the possibility of supernatural manifestations is based upon solid proof. Whoever admits the fact of creation, and no one not hopelessly prejudiced can possibly escape such an admission, must also admit that God can manifest Himself according to His own good pleasure in the world which He has called into existence. If God created the world, as He most certainly did, and if He established the laws by which that world is governed, as follows necessarily from the fact of creation, it is clearer than the light of day that He can produce effects in that world which transcend nature's powers, and which for that reason are justly called supernatural. Hence when such effects are recorded by trustworthy witnesses, they are as deserving of credit as are the purely natural facts recorded by the same witnesses. To receive the one and to reject the other, is not a sign of critical acumen, but only a manifestation of unreasonable prejudice.

Consequently the fact that so many modern critics, who are fully acquainted with

the contents of the Sacred Books, persistently deny Christ's divinity, need cause no anxiety whatever. Their point of departure from the received Christian view is not to be looked for in the Bible, but in the false philosophic systems in which they have been trained, and which have so biased their minds against all that lies beyond the world of phenomena, that they cannot perceive the truth even though it appear before them in noonday brightness. It is well to bear in mind that other critics, equally as well versed in the Sacred Writings, admit without hesitation that the Evangelists testify in no uncertain terms to the divinity of Christ, and that their testimony is undoubtedly true. Catholic and non-Catholic scholars alike have sifted the evidence with the greatest care; they have duly weighed all the difficulties brought to bear upon their position; yet the more they study the point at issue, and the more they consider their opponents' arguments, the more firmly they become convinced that Christ is in very truth the Son of God. It is not therefore a contest between educated unbelief and uneducated faith, as we are sometimes told by the advocates of modern Rationalism; but a contest between ingrained prejudice and open-minded sincerity, between the self-sufficiency of fallen nature and the recognized

limitations of all created intelligence. Faith is a gift of God, and that gift is not bestowed except where the heart is empty of self. In this connection it is well to recall the significant words of Christ: "I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in thy sight" (Matth. XI, 25). In order to believe, we must become like the little ones, whose unprejudiced minds are ever open to the light of truth, and whose uncorrupted hearts respond instinctively to the touch of divine love.

With this, therefore, we are prepared to begin our investigation, which will show us indeed that Christ is the very ideal of perfect manhood, as Rationalists and Modernists never tire of presenting Him to their followers; but it will also show us that He is infinitely more than the highest realization of human perfection. If we approach this subject in the proper disposition of mind and heart:—with a mind that is free from materialistic bias and with a heart that is true to its God-given instincts, we shall soon realize that Christ's human nature is but a veil that softens, indeed, but cannot conceal the splendor of His divinity. His uncreated love, touched with human sym-

pathy, will lift up our hearts into a new world of light and beauty. We shall realize that His beauty is the beauty of God clothed in human loveliness; that His love is the love of God throbbing with human interest; that He is indeed flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, yet true God of true God—our God Incarnate.

# The Christ of the Synoptics

The answer to our Lord's question, "What think you of Christ?" may be derived from one of two sources, which are, as far as their argumentive value is concerned, independent of one another. The first source is the record of His deeds and teaching as preserved for us in the writings of the New Testament; the other is the work which He has accomplished in the reformation of the world, and which remains to our own day such as He inaugurated it nineteen centuries ago. Both sources supply abundant material for an adequate appreciation of Christ's personality; for upon both of them that personality has been engraven in characters so large and striking that he who runs may read. It is not therefore true to say, as it sometimes is said, that all we know about Christ is contained in the Bible; as long as Christianity remains, so long is there a living witness that sets forth in eloquent and convincing terms all that distinguishes Christ from the rest of men:—a witness that was sent by Christ Himself to bear testimony to Him until the end of time. Hence even if the New Testament had never been writ-

ten, we should still be able to give a clear and definite answer to our Blessed Saviour's momentous question, "What think you of Christ?"

In these discussions, however, we shall have recourse principally to the evidence furnished by the New Testament writings, although in one or two instances we shall go somewhat beyond them and appeal to the work that lives after Christ. Most of the available evidence is contained in the Gospels, which, as you all know, are four in number; or as some prefer to put it, the one Gospel of Christ has come down to us in four different narratives. The first three, written respectively by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, are usually spoken of as the Synoptic Gospels, "because they are so constructed that, together, they present a synopsis or conspectus of the leading features of the work and teaching of our Lord." They have quite a large number of points in common, though each one records also some facts or sayings that are not contained in the other two. Partly because of the subject matter which forms the burden of their narrative, and partly because of the common type to which they belong, they are usually classed together and distinguished from that of St. John, which is generally referred to as the Fourth Gospel. We shall

first consider the teaching of these Synoptic Gospels, with a view to determine whether they represent Christ as a mere man, as Rationalists and Modernists contend, or whether they ascribe to Him a divine personality as Christianity has always believed.

At the very outset it may be freely conceded that the Synoptics do not emphasize the divinity of Christ in so marked a manner as does St. John. But the reason of this difference is quite obvious; because the first three Gospels were written at an early date, when the one point that was of paramount importance in the Apostolic teaching consisted in the fact that Christ was the promised Messiah, who had come to redeem the world from sin and to lead all men of good will to eternal salvation. Hence whatever deeds or sayings of Christ were calculated to bring out that point clearly and distinctly, were appropriately placed in the foreground; whilst His divine personality received only such passing notice as was necessary to set forth the full sense of His Messianic character. In this the Apostles and Evangelists were guided by divine Providence, which reveals the highest mysteries of religion only by degrees, as men's hearts are prepared to give them due consideration. Had they from the very beginning placed special emphasis upon Christ's divine personality, they

might have caused the greatest confusion in the minds of both Jews and Gentiles. For whilst the Jews on account of their strictly monotheistic belief found it extremely difficult to conceive of really distinct personalities in the Godhead, the Gentiles on the contrary owing to their polytheism were but too ready to admit a multiplicity of gods; and consequently any undue insistence upon Christ's divine sonship would at that early period have proved a decided hindrance to the work of evangelizing the world. It was quite different when St. John wrote his Gospel; for then Christ had already been accepted by a large following as the Saviour of mankind, and His supreme teaching authority was fully acknowledged. Men's minds were prepared to contemplate His divinity unobscured, as it were, by His Messianic character. Hence he could, without fear of scandalizing the little ones, preface his Evangelic message with those sublime words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." It was a truth which all the disciples of Christ believed, yet which had never before been placed in so clear a light.

From this, however, it must not be inferred that the Synoptics represented Christ

as merely a human being; they placed Him before the world as the Son of God, as the Well-Beloved of the Father, as the Supreme Arbiter of men's eternal destiny, as an object of divine worship, and consequently as the God Incarnate: but this they did by implication rather than by direct statement. The Christ whom they portrayed in their narratives, and whom the Apostles and the disciples generally preached to the people, was first and foremost a Saviour, although they made it clearly understood that His saving power had its source in the Godhead, which He had in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit. As a modern critic well observes: "The entire representation of Christ, which is given us by the Synoptics, may be placed side by side with that given by St. John, as being altogether identical with it. For a faith moulded in obedience to the Synoptic tradition concerning Christ, must essentially have the same features in its resulting conception of Christ as those which belong to the Christ of St. John." (Dorner, Person of Christ, p. 89.) And as another writer words it: "If the title of Divinity is more explicitly put forward in St. John, the rights which imply it are insisted on in words recorded by the earlier Evangelists" (Liddon, Divinity of our Lord, p. 255). That this is really the

case, we shall see in the course of the present discussion.

To keep the argument within reasonable limits, we must pass over that part of the Gospel narrative which treats of the birth and hidden life of Christ, although there is much contained in these chapters that places the Saviour from the very outset upon a superhuman plane. His virginal conception effected through the power of the most High; the angel's announcement that He is the Son of God; holy Simeon's declaration that in Him is fulfilled Israel's Messianic hope; the Evangelist's account of His divine wisdom as manifested in His questions and answers during His three day's stay in the Temple:—all these are so many facts which, if they do not actually declare His divinity, at least form an appropriate prelude to such a declaration in the future. Yet all this we may omit for the present, relying for our proof entirely upon the account of Christ's public life as contained in the three Synoptic Gospels.

As a first step in our argument we may take the Sermon on the Mount, which belongs to the early part of Christ's public ministry, and which is recorded somewhat more fully by St. Matthew, and in part also by St. Mark and St. Luke. This sermon was delivered almost immediately after the

choosing of the twelve Apostles, whom Christ had destined to carry the message of Redemption to the most distant nations. It may, therefore, well be regarded as a model after which the Apostles were to fashion their future preaching. And what a model it is! "Sent to save what was lost," Christ begins His famous discourse with a blessing upon all men of good will. "And opening his mouth," says St. Matthew, "he taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven" (V. 2-12).

What a surprise this introduction must have caused in the disciples and the multi-

tude that were gathered about Him, and listened with rapt attention to the words of love and mercy that flowed from His sacred lips! No Master in Israel had ever before spoken such words of divine consolation. In the discourses of the Scribes and Pharisees it was always the letter of the law that was emphasized, whilst the spirit was wholly ignored; but here was a teacher who raised that spirit to an importance that dominated all else. As a modern critic well observes: "Jesus furnishes here a universal ideal and a universal criterion. Not only did He describe the ideal in words; He also illustrated it in His own life. According to Jesus' teaching and example, a man's success or failure is to be judged not by the amount of money he can accumulate, or by the amount of social distinction he can command, or by the extent of his intellectual or official achievements; but rather by the essential character which he fashions within himself, and the service which he renders his fellow-men. In the Beatitudes Jesus calls men away from the superficial tests and standards which so commonly prevail, to a criterion which concerns the real nature of man, is equally just to all, and stands in relation not only to the few years of man's present existence, but to the whole

of his eternal career" (Votaw, Sermon on the Mount).

The doctrine here announced is truly divine, yet it is not from this that we primarily infer Christ's divine personality as manifested in the Gospels of the Synoptists. This introduction serves merely as a preparation, which was intended to dispose the hearts of His hearers, so that they might give due consideration to His claim of divine authority. For He continues: "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Of old the Law had been given on Mount Sinai. Its enactment had been accompanied by a portentous display of lightning and thunder, which filled the hearts of the people with dread and consternation. It was a law of fear, whose principal sanction was the vengeance of Jehovah's inexorable justice. Jesus does not mean to destroy that Law, but He professes to put upon it the impress of His own mission of love. And yet although He does not set aside what has been enacted in the days of old, He nevertheless assumes without hesitation, and in full consciousness of His inherent right to do so, the position of a supreme Lawgiver, whose authority is equal to that of Jehovah. For it must be noticed that He does not act merely as a

divine legate, whose power is dependent on and limited by the terms of the commission which he has received; but He evidently proceeds according to His own good pleasure and with an authority that knows no limitation. He does not say, as did the Prophets of old: "Thus saith the Lord God of hosts," but simply: "I say to you." He does not speak in the name and by the authority of another, as did Moses, the great lawgiver of the Jewish people; but He speaks simply in His own name and by His own inherent authority. It is not the vengeance of Jehovah that He puts forward as a sanction of His enactments, but His own displeasure, which gives them all the finality of divine laws.

To convince oneself of this, one needs but read the account of this sermon as given by St. Matthew, which ends with the significant statement, that "the people were in admiration at his doctrine; for he was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes and Pharisees" (VII. 28-29). "You have heard," Jesus tells the disciples and the multitude, "that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. . . . You have heard

that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you, that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. And it hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a bill of divorce. But I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery. . . Again you have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not forswear thyself: but thou shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord. But I say to you not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God: nor by the earth, for it is his footstool: . . .You have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you not to resist evil: but if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other: . . . You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemies: But I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you; that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the

just and the unjust. . . Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (V. 21-48).

Surely, such language no man has ever dared to use:—it is as absolute and final as was that of Jehovah, when of old He engraved the commandments of the Decalogue upon tablets of stone. In issuing this moral code, Christ assumed a position of authority that was supreme, and had He been but a mere man, He must necessarily have laid Himself open to the charge of blasphemous arrogance. And yet this position of independent authority, thus deliberately assumed at the very outset of His public career, He maintained with equal deliberation until His dying day. To this the Synoptists bear ample witness. They relate how He placed Himself far above all the Patriarchs and Prophets, and saintly men that ever lived:—all these, according to His teaching, were only servants of Jehovah but He was Jehovah's own Son (Matth. XXI, 33-39; Mark, XII, 1-12; Luke, XX, 41-44). He claimed a higher origin than that of son of David (Matth. XXII. 41-46); a greater glory than that of the Temple (Matth. XII, 6); nay, He put Himself in the very place of Jehovah as the spouse of men's immortal souls (Matth. IX, 14-17; Mark, II, 18-22; Luke, V. 33-38). Again, as

in the Sermon on the Mount He claimed independent legislative authority, so did He later on reassert that same authority when He told the Jews that He had power to change the observance of the Sabbath, advancing no other reason than that He was "Lord even of the Sabbath" (Matth. XII, 8). He reasserted that authority when He conferred upon His disciples the power to loosen and to bind upon earth in such wise that their actions should ipso facto be ratified in heaven. To Peter He said: 'I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matth. XVI, 19). And later on He entrusted a similar power to all the Apostles, saying: "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matth. XVIII, 18). The kingdom of heaven therefore He claims as His own: admission into it depends upon Him; He holds the key, that is, the supreme and absolute authority, and that authority He delegates to whomsoever He pleases. Could Jehovah Himself have spoken and acted with greater independence?

And this independent authority stands out just as strikingly in the position which He assumes as the end and object of men's highest aspirations, and as the source of their moral obligations and their individual responsibility. "Take my yoke upon you," He tells them, "and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest for your souls. Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matth. XI, 28-29). He places the yoke of His law upon all who wish to attain salvation, and yet He calls Himself meek and humble of heart! He demands the undivided service of every human being, and as a reward He offers Himself as the one object that can fill their souls with peace and joy:—yet He says that He is meek and humble of heart! What a travesty of humility this would be, were His claim to men's submission not based upon His own inherent divine authority! And of what boundless presumption must He not be judged guilty in promising to refresh all that labour and are burdened, had He not within Himself the plentitude of the Godhead!

And more still. Not only does He bid men to submit to His law, but He tells them to do so in spite of every obstacle that may stand in the way. In the tenth chap-

ter of St. Matthew's Gospel, Christ is recorded as saying: "Every one therefore that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven. . . . He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not up my cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it" (X. 32-38). Hence neither the tenderest affections of the human heart, nor the highest interest of man's social state, nor yet the loss of life itself, is deemed of sufficient weight to set aside the law of Christ. His demands are as absolute as those of Jehovah Himself. He deliberately puts Himself before His followers and before the world at large, as the final end and object of their existence. If men will save their souls, they must be ready to forego for His sake the love of father and mother, the love of son and daughter, and of all else to which their hearts may cling. He wishes to be their One and their All; He proposes Himself to one and all as the Supreme and Absolute Good. And yet this same Christ, as por-

trayed in the Synoptic Gospels, was the most loving, the most affectionate, the most humble of men: He was ever most considerate of the just claims of others; His life and conduct were the very antithesis of selfish ambition and overbearing pride; and how then could He consistently make such demands? Only on the supposition that He knew Himself to be God. And how could the Evangelists record these same demands without a word of explanation? Only on the supposition that they believed Him to be God.

This view forces itself even more strongly upon the thoughtful reader, when he comes to those passages in which the Evangelists record Christ's prediction of the Last Judgment, and the manner in which He will mete out reward and punishment to both angels and men. Not only will He come with great power and majesty to judge all nations, which alone would seem extraordinary enough, but He will judge them precisely according to the service which each individual person shall be found to have rendered or not rendered *Him*.. It is not their responsibility to Jehovah that comes in question, but their responsibility to *Him* alone. He will come, not with the angels of Jehovah, but with *His* angels; the nations shall be gath-

ered, not before the throne of Jehovah, but before *His* throne; He will approve or condemn, not what they have done or failed to do to Jehovah, but what they have done or failed to do to *Himself*. To them that shall be gathered on His right hand He will say: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you covered me: sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me. . . Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to *me*." And to them that shall stand on His left hand He will say: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me not in: naked, and you covered me not: sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. . . Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to *me*. And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting" (Matth. XXV, 31-46).

Is it possible that a merely human being, even though he had received from God plenipotentiary powers over all nations could have used language like this? Can any creature, whether angel or man, make himself the absolute standard of right and wrong, and then mete out eternal reward or punishment according as men have or have not conformed themselves to that standard? Would not that be a direct usurpation of divine rights and prerogatives? Yet Christ uses such language; He sets Himself up as such a standard; He rewards and condemns precisely as men have or have not rendered Him their undivided service:—and all this He does with the most perfect consistency. As at the beginning of His public career He placed Himself before the world as the Supreme Lawgiver, and as during the course of that same career He ever pointed to His own person as the object of men's highest aspiration; so now at the very end He announces publicly that He will come as the Supreme Judge, and that He will decide men's eternal destinies according to their observance of the laws which He Himself has made. Whatever may be the objective value of His claim that He was a divine person, for with that we are not now directly concerned, He certainly was con-

sistent in urging it to the last, and that consistency the Synoptists have recorded in unequivocal terms. "If the title of Divinity is more explicitly put forward in St. John, the rights which imply it are insisted on in words recorded by the earlier Evangelists."

Now having this fact before your mind, what meaning, do you think, did the Evangelists assign to the title, Son of God, as applied to Christ? Did they intend to signify thereby merely that Christ was a just man, or that He was a purely human Messiah, as Rationalists and Modernists would have us believe? Or did they also attach to it the further meaning that Christ Himself was really God, as the Church has always held and taught? Taken together, the three Synoptic Gospels apply the title to Christ twenty-four times, and is it possible that they never used it in its natural and obvious sense, when Christ's whole conduct, as narrated by themselves, constantly urged that sense upon their acceptance? When, for instance, St. Matthew (XIV, 33) relates how Jesus stilled the tempest, and how thereupon "they that were in the boat came and adored him, saying: Indeed thou art the Son of God," is it conceivable that this title did not convey to him the full significance of Christ's di-

vine personality? Or when he records how at Christ's baptism (III, 17) and at His transfiguration (XVIII, 5) a voice from heaven was heard to say: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him," is it likely that he failed to recognize in that voice the Father's own testimony to the divinity of His Son? Or again, when he so graphically describes that memorable scene at Caesarea Philippi, where Peter made his profession of faith in his Master's divinity, saying: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," is it reasonable to suppose that, whilst he narrated this, he thought only of Christ's Messianic diginity? Whatever may have been the meaning attached to this title by those who first used it, there can be no doubt whatever that to the Evangelists it was expressive of Christ's divine personality. The whole tenor of their narratives vouches for this. They throughout represent Christ as the Son of God in the strict sense of that term, and consequently they cannot be supposed to exclude this sense when they expressly call Him Son of God.

Again, in view of the fact that Christ assumed from the very beginning of His public career a position of independent and divine authority, and consistently maintained that position to the last moment,

what meaning must He Himself have attached to this title? What did He mean when He called Himself the Son, and when He claimed that God was His Father? As recorded by the first three Evangelists, He made use of these expressions on at least a score of different occasions. What value did the title have in His own mind? Is it reasonable to suppose that to Him it was nothing more than the outward expression of an intimate moral union with God, when His whole conduct was expressive of a relation of absolute equality with the Father? Is it conceivable that He should constantly act as a divine person, and then when He called Himself the Son of God, He should only mean to indicate that He was a man? If to His own mind this title did not signify that He shared the divine nature with the Father, and that therefore He was true God, His actions most certainly belied His words; and if for nineteen hundred years the whole Christian world has erroneously understood His words in their literal and obvious sense, and in consequence has paid Him divine honors, although He was but a man, He Himself was the cause of that error, and He Himself is responsible for that idolatry. Yet Rationalists and Modernists will have it that He was the very ideal of human per-

fection: that no one can ever hope to equal Him in wisdom and holiness:—and He should have been guilty of a deception that would be altogether unintelligible in a man of common honesty and ordinary prudence? Would there be any consistency whatever in such a supposition?

Here it is well to bear in mind how carefully Christ distinguishes, on all occasions, between His own and His disciples relation to the Father. He reminds His followers again and again that they have a Father in heaven even as He has; yet He never places them on the same level with Himself in regard to the implied sonship. They are indeed sons of God, but He alone is *the Son*:—His is a sonship that is shared by no creature; it is altogether unique. Hence He never says, "our Father", but always, "my Father", and, "your Father". "Be you therefore perfect, as also *your* heavenly Father is perfect" (Matth. V, 48). "He that doth the will of *my* Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (VII, 21). Even the "Our Father" in the prayer which He taught His disciples is no exception to this invariable rule. As He did not include Himself in the petition, "forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors" (VI 12), so neither did He mean to include Himself in

the opening words, "Our Father who art in heaven". This universally observed distinction indicates with sufficient clearness that in Christ's own mind His disciples were sons of God by adoption, whereas He and He alone was the Son of God by nature. As He viewed the matter, there was between His divine sonship and that of His disciples a gulf of separation that could never be bridged over:—they were different not only in degree but in kind.

Furthermore, on several occasions He brought out this distinction so clearly that no one could fail to understand its full significance. Thus, for instance, in the parable of the vineyard and the husbandmen, He represents the prophets and saintly men of old, as compared to Himself, simply as the servants of Jehovah, whilst He is Jehovah's Son and heir, to whom all His Father's possessions belong by way of natural inheritance. As just and holy men, they were indeed sons of Jehovah, yet theirs was a sonship that did not remove the condition of servitude which was theirs by nature as God's creatures; but He is Jehovah's Son in a higher sense, which raises Him above all servitude, because His sonship is based not upon adoption but upon divine generation. (Matth. XXI, 33; Mark, XI, 32; Luke, XX, 5).

Again, on other occasions Christ used the title, Son of God, in such a way that its meaning is quite clear without reference to His ordinary conduct or to the sonship of other just men. Thus both St. Matthew and St. Luke record Him as saying to His disciples: "All things are delivered to me by my Father. And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth anyone know the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal him" (Matth. XI, 27; Luke, X, 22). In this text Christ brings out two points very clearly: First, that His own dignity and perfection is such that no one can adequately know it, except God the Father, whose knowledge being divine comprehends even the fullness of the Godhead. Now if only God can know the full perfection of the Son, then the Son must indeed be divine; for were He a created being, no matter how great might be His perfection, He would necessarily come within the range of created intelligence. The second point clearly set forth is the comprehensive knowledge of the Son in respect to God the Father. He claims that He knows the Father even as the Father knows Him; for when He says that no one knoweth the Father, but the Son, He evidently alludes to a knowledge that transcends all created understanding.

And this knowledge, He implies, is the natural result of His sonship. Now if as Son He is equal to the Father in knowledge, He must also be equal to Him in nature; because the one necessarily implies the other, in as much as divine knowlege is inseparable from the divinity. This saying of Christ therefore, thus recorded by the Synoptists, is identical in meaning with the striking statement of St. John, that "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (I, 18). Both assert unequivocally that Christ is the true Son of God:—that Christ Himself is God. Hence when Christ calls Himself the Son of God, or when He claims that God is His Father, He asserts that He Himself is True God of True God, consubstantial with the Father.

With equal clearness is Christ's meaning set forth in the answer which He gave the High priest, as He stood before the Sanhedrin on the eve of His death. When He was solemnly adjured to say openly whether He was the Son of the living God, He did so without hesitation. Rationalists and Modernists contend that His answer on that memorable occasion was nothing but an assertion of His Messianic office, but their contention is plainly contradicted by

the account of St. Luke, who narrates the proceedings of the trial in greater detail than St. Matthew does. As he puts it, Christ was asked two distinct questions. The first was, whether He was the Christ, that is, the Messiah. This question He answered by saying: "If I shall tell you, you will not believe me. And if I shall also ask you, you will not answer me, nor let me go. But hereafter the Son of man," that is, the Messiah, "shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God." This reference to the power of God, suggested the question that was to decide His fate. For they asked immediately: "Art thou then the Son of God?" that is, not only the Messiah, but also God's own Son? And Jesus answered: "You say that I am," which is the Hebrew way of saying: You speak the truth; I am in very deed. "Then they said: What need we any further testimony? for we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth." This gave them the long desired pretext for putting him to death. From His whole previous conduct they had indeed inferred that He claimed divine sonship in the strict sense of that term, but they desired a clear statement on His part, so that they might hold Him up to the people as a blasphemer:—as one whom they believed to be only a man, yet who claimed to be God. Hence on

that solemn occasion, when His very life was at stake, Christ not only claimed that He was the Messiah, but also that He was the Son of God, and therefore a divine person. It was for this claim that the Sanhedrin condemned Him to death, and it was to defend the truth of this claim that He died upon the cross.

Nor did His claim that He was a divine person end here. For after His resurrection, as both St. Matthew and St. Mark relate, He sent His Apostles to preach His doctrine to all nations, saying: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matth. XXVIII, 18-20; Mark, XVI 15). Here He explicitly commands that all nations be baptized, not merely in the name of the Father and the Holy Ghost, but in His name as well. Now this seems possible only on the supposition that the one divine nature is common to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and that therefore the Son, as well as the Father and the Holy Ghost, is truly God. And this doctrine of His own divine person-

ality He solemnly commands to be preached to the whole world, and to be believed by all who wish to save their souls; for St. Mark adds: "He that believeth not shall be condemned."

Such then is the teaching of the Synoptists concerning Christ's personality:—their entire narrative implies that He is, in the strictest sense of the term, the Son of God—that He is True God. To eliminate this teaching from their Gospels, the documents which have come down to us must be rejected almost entirely; yet even the most advanced critics admit that this cannot be done, and therefore the only possible conclusion is, that the Synoptists no less than St. John bear unequivocal testimony to Christ's divine personality.

# The Christ of St. Paul

According to the teaching of the first three Evangelists Christ is truly a divine person, the Only Begotten Son of God, who, in the fullness of time, became man for the redemption of the world. This teaching is so interwoven with the entire narrative, that any attempt to eliminate it must necessarily result in the rejection of the documents themselves. Yet the documents are so evidently genuine, at least as regards the substance of their contents, that no Rationalist or Modernist has yet ventured to set them aside, although their united efforts have been directed to that end for years. Hence, even if we had nothing but these three Gospels, the divinity of Christ, as manifested during His earthly existence, would be as well attested as any other fact in history. Higher critics may try to explain away the significance of the statements made by these Evangelists, yet the statements themselves remain, and to the thoughtful and unbiased reader they can have no other meaning than that Christ is God as well as man.

Scarcely less important than these first

three Gospels are the writings of St. Paul, whose testimony to Christ's divinity we shall consider in the present chapter. Some of his earlier Epistles, as those to the Thessalonians and Galatians, are quite generally supposed to have been written even before the first of the Synoptic Gospels, and therefore they may be considered as the oldest part of the New Testament. It is, however, not exclusively the early date of his writings that makes them so valuable, but rather the sincerity of his convictions and the strength of his personality, which enabled him to set forth the truth as he knew it, in spite of every obstacle that might stand in the way. Moreover he had never come in personal contact with the Saviour, and therefore he was wholly uninfluenced by that powerful charm, which, as Rationalists will have it, biased the minds of Christ's immediate disciples. In fact, his early training, the traditions of his family, and his own strongly Judaistic views in regard to the coming Messiah, had so hopelessly prejudiced him against the claims of Christ, that nothing short of a direct divine intervention would seem able to make of him aught else than a mortal enemy of the Christian name. Hence, if in later years he bore testimony to Christ, and laid down his very life in the defense of Christ's divin-

ity, his testimony must necessarily carry with it a weight that deserves the serious consideration of every thoughtful man.

Saul of Tarsus, as he was called before his conversion, was a learned Pharisee, who, as he himself tells us in the Epistle to the Galatians, "made progress in the Jews' religion above many of his equals in his own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of his fathers." He first appears upon the page of history as an abettor of the execution of St. Stephen, on which occasion the witnesses laid down their garments at his feet. From that day on, his hatred against the Christians knew no bounds. As he himself puts it in the same Epistle to the Galatians, he "persecuted the Church of God beyond measure, and wasted it." Or as the Acts so graphically describe it, he "breathed out threatenings and slaughter" against the disciples of the Lord. But in the very midst of his bloodthirsty career, the saving grace of the merciful Redeemer, whom he persecuted in his disciples, touched his heart and changed him so completely that both his enemies and his friends were alike astonished. This conversion, at once the most striking in its sincerity and the most far-reaching in its results, took place near Damascus in Syria, whither he had gone with letters from the

High priest that empowered him to arrest any men and women whom he might find there confessing Christ, and bring them bound to Jerusalem. "Suddenly a light shined round about him. And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Who said: Who art thou, Lord? And He: I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And he trembling and astonished said: Lord what wilt thou have me do? and the Lord said to him: Arise and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. . . . And Saul arose from the ground; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. But they leading him by the hands, brought him to Damascus. And he was there three days, without sight, and he did neither eat nor drink." At the end of this time, a certain disciple, named Ananias, was sent to him by the Lord, who restored his sight and baptized him. "And when he had taken meat, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples at Damascus, for some days. And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts, IX, 1-21).

Such is the story of Saul's conversion, as related in the Acts of the Apostles, and as

corroborated by himself in his Epistles. It was as sudden as it was complete, and it illustrates the marvelous power of God's grace, which can soften even the most hardened hearts. Saul was blinded by prejudice, yet when the light of grace flooded his soul, he embraced the truth with a sincerity and whole-heartedness that was absolute. Many years later he wrote to the Corinthians: "By the grace of God I am what I am"; but he added most appositely, "and his grace in me hath not been void" (1 Cor. XV, 10). His response to the call of the Lord was instantaneous. "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" was his first question, when he realized that the finger of God had touched his soul. The Christ whom he had considered an impostor stood before him as God's own Son, and His name he must henceforth carry "before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts, IX, 15). However, it was not God's intention that he should do so immediately; he must first pass through a severe spiritual probation, lest his natural impetuosity should carry him beyond the bounds of prudence and discretion. Hence, guided by the Holy Spirit, he retired into Arabia, and there he spent two years in prayer and meditation and study, preparing himself for the work which the Lord

had assigned to him as his share in the conversion of the world. There, too, he most likely received those wonderful revelations which enabled him afterwards to say: "I give you to understand, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. Neither did I receive it from man, nor did I learn it; but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. I, 11. 12). Hence his teaching was in a manner distinct from that of the other Apostles, in as much as it flowed, so to speak, from a different source. The others preached what they had heard and seen; they bore witness to Christ as they had known Him in His mortal life: Paul, as he was henceforth called, gave forth what had been revealed to him in spirit; he preached Christ as he had seen Him in His glorified body. Yet he preached the same Christ; for some eighteen years after his conversion, as he tells us, he went up to Jerusalem, in order to communicate to the other Apostles the gospel which he had announced to the Gentiles, "lest perhaps he should run, or have run in vain." He would not trust himself entirely to his own subjective impressions, but preferred to confirm the truth of his teaching by an appeal to the visible authority which Christ had established on earth.

Nor did he consider himself justified to enter upon his great missionary career merely on the strength of his own private revelations. He patiently waited until the call came to him through the acknowledged authority of the Church. It was only when, at the bidding of the Holy Spirit, the Church of Antioch had imposed hands upon him, and sent him away to begin the work for which he had been chosen by God, that he finally commenced those Apostolic labors, which were to link his name forever to that of the Prince of the Apostles. From that day forward the Spirit of the Lord gave him no rest until he had carried the name of Christ to the most distant nations. Asia Minor, Greece, the islands of the Mediterranean, Italy, and most probably Spain, received from him the message of salvation as he himself had received it from Christ. His success was marvelous. Persons flocked to him from every rank of society; they listened to his burning words, received his doctrine, and confessed Christ. These he gathered into communities, and when he had placed them in charge of consecrated pastors, he set out for new conquests in other lands. It was to some of these several communities that he wrote the Epistles which have come down to us under his name. They are fourteen in

number, of varying length and importance; and from them we must gather Paul's teaching concerning Christ, as we shall now proceed to do.

As one would naturally suppose, and as even a superficial reading readily shows, these Epistles are in no sense so many systematic expositions of Christian doctrine: they are merely occasional letters, called forth by the needs of individual churches. Some of them contain warnings against rising heresies; other reprehend religious abuses among the faithful; others give directions for the guidance of those in authority; whilst some few deal with questions of universal application. Yet whilst this is true as regards their general character, it is conceded on all hands that they contain sufficient doctrinal matter to enable one to arrive at a clear understanding of the writer's faith and teachings. They are the letters of an Apostle, and as such they necessarily reflect the message which he was sent to announce in the name and by the authority of Christ. What that message was, at least in its bearing upon the person of Christ, we shall now endeavor to show.

St. Paul's teaching concerning Christ and His work may be gathered around two central or fundamental truths, which stand

out clearly and distinctly in nearly every one of his letters. The first of these truths is, that Christ is the promised Messiah, who by the outpouring of His blood redeemed the world from sin. "When the fullness of time was come," he tells the Galatians, "God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law: that he might redeem them who were under the law: that we might receive the adoption of sons" (IV. 4, 5). He was deeply impressed with the historic fact that the human race had originally fallen from grace, and had thereby come under the domination of sin. This domination of sin was universal, because it had its origin in the head of the human family, who transmitted his sinful condition to all his descendants. "By one man," he writes to the Romans, "sin entered into this world and by sin death; and so death passed unto all men in whom all have sinned" (V. 12). And this sin of nature, which infects each human soul at its very origin, prepares the way for those other transgressions which imply an abuse of the individual free will, and therefore constitute personal sin. Under this twofold weight of iniquity, as St. Paul on various occasions so graphically describes it, the world was groaning and travailing even

until the coming of Christ. It was from this condition of unrighteousness and moral servitude that Christ was to deliver mankind through the sacrifice of His own life.

Hence in His character of Saviour and Redeemer, Christ was considered by St. Paul as the second Adam, who by His obedience was to undo the harm wrought by the disobedience of the first Adam. It is in this sense that he writes to the Romans: "As by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just" (V. 19). The first Adam was the moral head and representative of the entire human race; upon his fidelity to the law of his Maker depended the happiness and initial righteousness of all his posterity. He had his probation and his trial, but he was found wanting, and so the race went astray from its God. The second Adam took the same relative position of headship in the moral order; upon Him was made dependent the salvation of all. He too had His probation and His trial, but He was faithful unto death, and so He started a new movement Godward. Yet this new Godward movement, as St. Paul conceived it, postulated first of all a full reparation of the injury done to God by sinful man. Christ therefore must pay the price of

Redemption, and so restore to God the honor of which he had been robbed by His own creatures. Hence when St. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that God "hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself. , , . . in His beloved Son", he immediately added, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (I, 5-7). And the Corinthians he reminds of the fact that Christ "who knew no sin; God hath made sin for us, that we might be made the justice of God in Him" (II. Cor. 5, 21). A similar expression he uses in his letter to the Galatians, where he writes: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on the tree" (Gal. III, 13). To the mind of St. Paul, therefore, Christ is not merely our Saviour in an ethical sense, in as much as He led our fallen race back to God by the holiness of His example and the purity of His doctrine, but He is in very truth a Redeemer, who in His own person paid the ransom required by the justice of God. It was in this sense that he wrote to the Colossians: "And you, when you were dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh;

he hath quickened together with him, forgiving you all offenses: blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross." (II, 13, 14).

According to St. Paul's teaching, therefore, Christ's sufferings are vicarious in character:—we had sinned, but He suffered for our sins; He was without sin, yet He was made the victim to be immolated for the forgiveness of sin; He bore the pains of the redemption, yet we reaped the fruit thereof. It is this same idea of vicarious sufferings that enters so largely into St. Paul's conception of Christ's priesthood. He represents Christ as the eternal High-priest, who through His death enters the Holy of Holies, and offers Himself as a victim of propitiation for the sins of the world. "It was fitting," he writes to the Hebrews, "that we should have such a high-priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needs not daily (as the other priests) to offer sacrifices first for his own sins and then for the people's; for this He did once, in offering Himself" (VII, 26, 27). In this sacrifice "we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once." (X, 10).

Hence this death of the sinless Christ, whilst it fully satisfied the justice of an offended God, is at the same time the source of life for the world that was dead in sin. To this truth St. Paul refers in nearly all his Epistles, taking special care to impress upon the faithful that their life springs from the death of Christ, yet in such wise that they must appropriate that life by the acceptance of His grace. "With Christ," he writes to the Galatians, "I am nailed to the cross. And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I live not in the flesh; I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself for me." (II, 19, 20). And to the Romans he addresses this beautiful passage: "Know you not that all we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death? For we are buried together with Him by baptism in death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer." (VI, 3-6). Christ therefore is the source of a

new life, which He communicates to all who are united to Him through a practical faith in His redemption. He is the true Messiah, who was to crush the head of the serpent, and secure for the fallen race the hard fought victory over sin and death.

This is the first fundamental truth that runs through all the writings of St. Paul, and with this the second one, equally as fundamental, is intimately connected. This is the divine Sonship of Christ. The Christ of St. Paul was indeed a true man; for "it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high-priest before God, that he might be a propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that, wherein he himself hath suffered and been tempted, he is able to succor them also that are tempted" (Hebr. II, 17, 18). But this same Christ is also constantly represented as the Son of God. It was because of His divine sonship that He himself was sinless and that he had the power to satisfy for the sins of others. It was on account of this same divine sonship that St. Paul beheld in the Saviour's sufferings and death a manifestation of God's boundless love for man. "He that spared not even His own Son," he writes to the Romans, "but delivered him up for us all, how hath he

not also, with him, given us all things?" (VIII, 32). Christ is not only God's Son, as in a certain sense all just men are the sons of God, but He is God's Own Son, by a filiation, therefore, which He does not share with creatures. Yet this can only mean one thing, namely, that He was begotten of the Father and therefore a divine person. Hence the fact that God delivered Him up for us all was indeed a manifestation of divine love, which would make all other gifts, however great, appear as insignificant.

It is sometimes objected that this conclusion does not seem to tally with the fact that St. Paul attributes Christ's divine sonship to His resurrection and ascension, speaking of these events in such a way as if Christ was then constituted Son of God. Thus in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts he is recorded as addressing his countrymen in Pisidia in these words: "And we declare unto you, that the promise which was made to our fathers, the same God hath fulfilled to our children, raising up Jesus, as in the second Psalm also is written. "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." And in the Epistle to the Romans he says of Christ that He "was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification, by

the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead." Hence it would seem that the divine sonship was conferred upon Christ as a reward for the work of redemption, to which He had submitted Himself out of obedience to God's will, and consequently He would not be a divine person. This objection, however, has no real force, if the texts quoted are interpreted according to the mind of the Apostle. For he does not intend to assert that the resurrection was the origin of Christ's divine sonship, but only that it was a manifestation of the same. During His mortal life, Christ appeared subject to all the infirmities that are necessarily connected with a true human existence; His Divinity was, as it were, hidden under the veil of His Humanity, but after His resurrection all this was changed. Then the glory of His divine personality was poured out upon His human nature; then He entered as man upon that glorious existence which had been His always as God; and therefore the resurrection might well be said to be an outward manifestation of His divine sonship "in power, according to the spirit of sanctification."

That this was really the meaning of St. Paul appears to evidence from his teaching concerning the nature of Christ's divinity,

as set forth in several of his Epistles. Thus warning the Colossians against certain false teachers, who tried to "degrade Jesus Christ to the rank of one of a long series of inferior beings, supposed to range between mankind and the supreme God," he tells them that Jesus Christ "is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." And fearing lest this expression might not be sufficiently clear, he adds the reason why He must be considered the image of God, even as human children are the images of their parents; and why He must be accepted as the first-born of every creature, that is, superior to all things created. "For," he says, "in him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and in him. And he is before all, and by him all things consist." (I, 15-17). He is therefore the image of God, because He has the very nature of God, being Himself the Creator, who by His omnipotent power called all things out of nothingness at the beginning of time. He is the first-born of every creature, because He is before all, and by Him all things consist. His relation to the world of created things is threefold; for all things in earth and in heaven,

seen and unseen, men and angels, were created in Him, by Him and for Him. They were created in Him, because His own infinite being is the archetypal form after which all creatures were fashioned, and in Him they have their strength and consistency of being; they were created by Him, because it was His omnipotent power that summoned the worlds out of nothingness, and sustains them in their existence; they were created for Him, because He did not create them for a God superior to Himself, but He made them for His own glory, being their one end, as well as their one source. Christ, therefore, although true man, is also true God; because He is the beginning and the end of all things.

Nor is this the only place in which St. Paul teaches the divinity of Christ in terms that cannot be misunderstood. When he wishes to exhort the Philippians to practice humility and self-renunciation, he points to Christ as their model, "who," he says, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man, and in habit found as a man." (II, 6, 7). That is, before He assumed a human nature, Christ was God, possessing all the

perfections of the Divinity; possessing them, not as it were by an act of unjust usurpation, but by right of His divine origin. Yet God though He was, He deigned to assume the form of a servant, hiding His divine glory under the veil of human nature. In this human nature, thus assumed as His own, He, the God of might and majesty, "humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." "For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth; and .that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."

It would have been impossible for the Apostle to adduce a stronger argument, whereby to persuade his converts to practice humility; yet the force of the argument depends entirely upon the truth of Christ's divinity. Had His claim to be equal with the Father been unfounded; had it rested upon robbery or an act of unjust usurpation; it would not have been humility on His part to appear as man and to yield obedience, but simply an act of justice and of necessity. Neither would the act have been deserving of the reward

which the Apostle claims for Christ. A merely human Christ, though the most perfect of God's creatures, could not be made the object of divine honors, so that "in His name every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." Hence not only does the Apostle directly assert that Christ was true God; but he made that assertion the foundation of an argument which was to enforce the practice of the most difficult of Christian virtues. Yet, if anything, St. Paul was logical, and it would be folly to believe that he rested his argument upon a false supposition.

And thus, if there were need of it, we might adduce a vast number of texts, in which St. Paul sets forth the same doctrine, that Christ is God's own Son, that He is true God. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians (II, 8) he calls Him the Lord of glory; in his Second Epistle to the same church, he states that Christ before becoming man "possessed all the riches of the Godhead." Writing to the Colossians, he affirms that in Christ "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporeally"; and in his celebrated letter to the Romans, he says that Christ "is over all things, God

blessed forever." In conformity with this teaching, he constantly exhorts his followers to invoke the name of Christ as that of God (I Cor. I, 2; II Tim. II, 22; Rom. X, 12-14, etc.); he associates Him with God the Father as the one true foundation of the Christian Church (I. Thess. I, 1; III, 11; II. Thess. I, 1); the Life of all Christians and the Bestower of eternal glory (Col. III, 4). Hence that St. Paul, at one time an unbelieving Pharisee, became after his conversion a firm believer in Christ's divinity, and preached that divinity to the Gentile world, admits absolutely of no doubt. He claimed to know only Christ, and that Christ alone he was commissioned to preach; but the Christ whom he knew, and the Christ whom he preached was most certainly true God. Not even St. John sets forth the divinity of Christ in more striking terms. And yet St. Paul's writings, as already stated, were not meant to be a full and systematic explanation of Christian doctrine; they were intended only for believing Christians, with whom the divinity of Christ was a fundamental article of the faith. In what terms, then, do you think, would he have expressed himself, had he committed to writing all that he believed and taught concerning Christ's divine personality? Had

he thought fit to do so, we should most certainly have had a document which would have been the despair of Rationalists and Modernists, although it is almost equally certain that they would not have acknowledged it as the work of St. Paul.

A neat summing up of St. Paul's faith in Christ has been preserved for us in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Modern critics, of course, will not have it that the Apostle of the Gentiles ever wrote this famous letter, but that the doctrine contained therein is truly Pauline in character, nothing but bad faith can call in question. The summary reads as follows: "God who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high. Being made so much the better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels hath he said at any time, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he

shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith: And let all the angels adore him. And to the angels indeed he saith: He that maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire. But to the Son: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: . . . And: Thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth: and the works of thy hands are the heavens. They shall perish, but thou shalt continue: and they shall all grow old as a garment. And as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the selfsame, and thy years shall not fail" (I, 1 : 12).

# The Word Incarnate

As was shown in the discussion on The Christ of the Synoptics, the first three Evangelists teach the divinity of Christ by implication rather than by direct statement. They narrate His words and His deeds in such a way that anyone who reads their narratives with an open and unbiased mind is led to the unavoidable conclusion that Christ claimed to be True God, and that the Evangelists fully accepted His claim as legitimate; but in no single instance do they put this claim forward as the burden of their narratives. It runs through their accounts of His life and deeds from beginning to end, and it underlies Christ's own teaching as its one solid foundation; yet they never seem solicitous to put upon it any special stress, or even to set it forth in clear and explicit terms. What seems to have been uppermost in their minds, and what they appear to have deemed of prime importance for their immediate followers, may be summed up in the angel's message to the shepherds of Bethlehem: "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for this day is born to you a

Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David" (Luke, II, 11). They announced first and foremost that Christ was the Saviour, who had redeemed the world from sin; although they wished at the same time to have it clearly understood that He was also the Son of God:—that He was a God Incarnate.

The very opposite of this seems to be true in the case of St. John. He also knows that Christ is the Messiah; that He was sent to save that which was lost; that He laid down His life for His sheep: but what he keeps constantly before the reader, and what he almost never fails to emphasize, is the fact that Christ is a divine Messiah; that He is True God of True God, the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. This difference of scope and method, as observed in St. John and the Synoptics, is aptly stated by St. Augustine in his commentary on St. John's Gospel where he says: "In the four Gospels, or rather in the four books of the one Gospel, the Apostle St. John, deservedly compared to an eagle by reason of his spiritual understanding, has lifted his annunciation of truth to a far higher and sublimer point than the other three, and by this elevation he would fain have lifted up our hearts likewise. For the other three Evangelists

walked, so to speak, on earth with our Lord as man. Of His Godhead they said but a few things. But John, as if he found it oppressive to walk on earth, has opened his treatise with a peal of thunder; he has raised himself not merely above the earth, and the whole compass of the air and heaven, but even above every angel-host, and every order of the invisible powers, and has reached even to Him by Whom all things were made, in that sentence, 'In the beginning was the Word'" (In Joan. 36).

However, this difference, as regards both method and scope, must not be attributed entirely to the difference of personality in the several Evangelists. It arose to a great extent from the altered conditions in Ecclesiastical affairs that had developed since the first three Gospels had been written. According to the commonly accepted view of modern critics, at least thirty years intervened between the appearance of St. Luke's Gospel, which was the last of the Synoptics in point of time, and that of St. John. During this interval, the spirit of skepticism and religious innovation, which somehow seems common to all ages and countries, had found sufficient time to assert itself, and there were not wanting those who set up theories of their own concerning Christ's work and mission and the

fundamental fact of His divine personality. St. Peter, St. James, St. Jude, and St. John himself, found it necessary to warn the faithful against these religious skeptics and innovators in the several Epistles which they wrote; whilst St. Paul, in one of his earliest Letters, saw himself constrained to pronounce anathema upon certain mischief-makers, who preached a gospel different from the one which he had received from Christ. Some there were who made pretension to the possession of secret knowledge, not vouchsafed to the faithful at large, and who for that reason called themselves Gnostics, or the Knowing Ones. One of their tenets, which they began to broach towards the end of the first century, attributed to Christ a sort of inferior divinity, which made of Him a being midway between the highest angel and the Supreme God. Others again maintained that Christ was purely human, but had been raised to extraordinary sanctity by the communication of the Holy Spirit, through whose power He had wrought His miracles. Their leader, a certain Cerinthus, lived at Ephesus, the adopted city of St. John, where he drew after him a large following. Hence if Christ was true God, consubstantial with the Father, the time had certainly come when that truth should be set forth in the

clearest and most unequivocal terms. It should be set forth, moreover, by one who could speak with all the authority of an eye witness, and whose commission to teach had come directly from Christ Himself. Such a one was St. John. For as he himself says in his First Epistle: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life: . . . we declare unto you, that you may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (I, 1-3).

Moreover it was very desirable that the writer of the Gospel should accommodate himself, as far as that was possible, to the phraseology of the men whose errors he wished to correct; so that there might be no room for dispute about the meaning of terms. Now at that time there was much speculation going on about the divine Logos, or the divine Word, first introduced into philosophic discussions by Plato, and later on popularized by the Jewish philosopher Philo. Both the doctrine and the term had to some extent been adopted by certain Gnostic theorizers in their teaching concerning Christ's relation to the Godhead. Hence if the term could be employed in an

orthodox sense, its use by the Evangelist would be more than justified. Whether St. John was to any extent conversant with the various philosophic systems that flourished in Asia Minor in his day, may indeed be a matter of reasonable doubt; but that he had considerable knowledge of the Logos doctrine and of the terms in which it was expressed, can hardly be called in question. The mere fact that heretical teachers made use of it to impugn the divinity of Christ, was in itself sufficient to bring it to his notice. Moreover although the doctrine as taught by Philo was more or less a matter of philosophic speculation, nevertheless it had a solid foundation in the Old Testament writings, where God's Eternal Wisdom and Creative Word appear time and again under a distinctly personal aspect. Hence there was a very good reason why St. John should begin his Gospel with that sublime sentence: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He saw in it the Christian statement of doctrine which had been revealed to the prophets of old, but which later philosophical speculations had sadly distorted.

It has been well said, that "if there were nothing else to the purpose in the whole New Testament, the first fourteen verses

of the fourth Gospel would suffice to persuade a believer in Holy Scripture of the truth that Jesus Christ is absolutely God" (Liddon, p. 228). In these few lines, which form a prologue or introduction to the Gospel narrative, St. John sets forth a summary of his own personal faith in the God Man:—a faith which had in the first instance indeed been freely bestowed by the merciful God, but which had also been nourished and strengthened and matured by what he himself had seen and heard and experienced of "the word of life" during his three years' association with Jesus of Nazareth. It is, as it were, an Apostolic profession of faith; not thrown out at random and then left standing by itself, but deliberately stated as an expression of his deepest conviction and casting its fervid glow over the entire subsequent narrative. Hence this Prologue is not merely a poetic effusion, as Rationalists will have it, but rather a succinct exposition of the most fundamental mystery of the Christian religion:—an exposition based partly upon revelations contained in the Old Testament and partly upon the historical facts which the Evangelist himself had observed and which he later on set forth in his Gospel. This is, aside from other reasons, sufficiently evident from the words with which

he concludes his narrative. For at the end of the twentieth chapter he says: "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing, you may have life in his name" (30, 31). What he has written therefore "in this book," are not pious reflections or devout meditations, but solid facts that rest upon a firm historical basis.

The Prologue reads as follows: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but was to give testimony of the light. That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not, he came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as

received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (I, 1-14.)

Well did St. Augustine say, that St. John "opened his treatise as it were with a peal of thunder"—it is a peal that has resounded over all the world, and whose echoes will not die away until the end of time. The Old Testament, sublime passages as it does contain, presents nothing that compares with this in solemn majesty, poetic beauty and depth of religious thought. On reading the opening lines, one feels as if the God-Man Himself were present, withdrawing for a moment the veil of His human nature and thus affording a passing glimpse of the fullness of His God-head. Time with its limitations is lost sight of, and the boundless ocean of eternity lies outstretched before the wondering mind. Creation itself withdraws from view, and the uncreated God is seen alone upon His throne of glory:—the uncreated God and the Word, who in the beginning was with God, and who was God. Poets may be able to body

forth the shapes of things unseen; they may be able to give to an airy nothing a local habitation and a name; but the poet did not live who gave forth a thought like this. It is a thought essentially divine, and as such it did not have its birth in human intelligence:—it sprang into being in the bosom of the Godhead, and thence it flashed its light through the darkness of created things, changing that darkness itself into a source of light. It is only as enlightened from on high that the human mind can conceive and that human tongue can utter those mystic words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It is the reflex of God's own eternal thought, gleaming forth from a mind created after His image and likeness.

It is almost a pity that we should have to subject this sublime passage to a critical analysis in order to bring out its doctrinal value. One feels instinctively that it is a subject for prayerful meditation rather than for critical study; yet because it enshrines in its poetic setting the most fundamental mysteries of our holy religion, there is need of studious inquiry into its deepest significance, so that it may become manifest what precise position these mysteries occupied in the mind of the disciple who

reclined on the bosom of his Master. It is with this end in view that we shall examine somewhat in detail the contents of this inspired Prologue.

For clearness' sake we may divide the whole passage into three distinct parts, although they so interlace with one another that it is difficult to draw between them a sharp line of demarcation. In the first part the Evangelist considers the Personal Word of God, as He was from all eternity in the bosom of the Father. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." He places himself in thought at the starting point of all time, at the moment when through absolute nothingness resounded the voice of the Omnipotent Creator, and in response to it the first created beings leaped into existence. Even then, at the very birth of time, the Word already was. He did not come into being when time began, but He is antecedent to all time:—He is outside and above all created things; He is eternal and self-existent, even as the eternal and self-existent God. "And the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He was with God, because He is the Word of God. God's uncreated intelligence conceived and brought forth the

Word even as the human mind conceives and brings forth the conscious thought. "The Word is the Thought of God, not intermittent and precarious like human thought, but subsisting with the intensity of a personal form." In one sense the Word is distinct from God, or rather from God the Father, in as much as He is generated or brought forth as a divine person; and yet in another sense He is identical with the same God, because He is God's own Word, God's own substantial wisdom, one with God in nature. Hence the relation of the Word to God, as indicated in these opening lines, is that of a son to his father; both share the same divine nature, although they are distinct as persons. In this the Evangelist calls attention to the profoundest mystery of the Godhead. The Eternal Generation of the Word, which indeed the human mind may prayerfully contemplate, but which it can never hope to fathom.

In the second part of the Prologue, the Evangelist sets forth the relation of the Word to creation, both as regards the creative act and the physical and moral condition of creatures after they have once been called into being. "All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made." Not only did the Word

exist before anything whatever came into being, but it was precisely the Word's creative power that filled the void of empty space with created existences. It is the Wisdom of God that conceives the possibility of creation; it is the Word of God that makes this possible creation an existing reality. Hence God the Word or God the Son, as St. John now speaks of Him, is so far from being a creature that He is the very Creator from whom all creatures receive their being. And to emphasize this truth, to check every heretical tendency toward looking upon the Word as something created, he repeats his first statement in another form, saying: "Without him was made nothing that was made." So that if anyone were to say that the Word was created, he must also say that the Word was created through the Word's own creative power; for without that power absolutely nothing was created. Yet such a statement would be manifestly absurd; because it is self-evident that a being must exist before it can act. Hence we see at what pains St. John is to make it clear that the Word is God in the strictest sense of the term:—that God the Son is equal to and consubstantial with the Father; that His is not an inferior god, such as the Gnostics conceived Him to be: but that He is

the Supreme God of heaven and earth—the One God besides whom there is no other God.

Then to show what was the moral influence of the Word upon the created world, he proceeds: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." As the Word is the source of all physical being, so is He also the well-spring of all moral perfection. "In him was life," that is, the fullness of truth and holiness. As God, the Word is Truth Itself, is Holiness Itself, and from Him comes every truth that man has ever known, from Him comes all holiness that has ever adorned the souls of men. Hence the life of the Word is the light of men. The first conscious thought of Adam was a reflex of the Word's uncreated truth; the first aspiration of his heart was a response to the Word's eternal love. In the order of nature and of grace there is no light save that which is enkindled at this divine source. The Word is the Fountain and Focus of universal life; from Him all life comes, and to Him all life must return. He is the boundless ocean of all intellectual and moral truth; He is the source and object of all true knowledge and love. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Nor was this true only whilst man remained in the state of innocence, in which he had been placed by the creative hand of God; even after Adam and his posterity had gone astray from their Creator, and groped their way through a moral darkness which was of their own making, the life of the Eternal Word still flowed in upon their souls, imparting light to their intellects and strength to their wills, although that light and strength were but too often rejected by those who needed it most. It is to this that the Evangelist refers when he says: "And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." At no time did God's providence and fatherly care abandon the descendants of sinful Adam. His wisdom ever spoke to them through the wonderful works of creation; His love unceasingly appealed to them through the bountiful blessings that supplied their daily wants:—and more than this, He spoke in their consciences, He pleaded in their hearts; He manifested His merciful designs in their regard through prophets and seers, so that if they were but of good will they might go forth from the region of the shadow of death, and be enlightened by "the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." The Word of God, the Son of the Most High, who is

light and life and love, was in the world from the very beginning; not in visible form, not as a God-Man, but in His invisible communications to the souls of men, as a Fountain of truth and a Source of holiness. He was there in the midst of ignorance and corruption, even as a light that "shineth in darkness," but which the darkness did not comprehend.

It was to open men's eyes to this divine Light, that a man was sent "for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him." This man was John the Baptist. He had been foretold by the prophet as "the voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God" (Is. XL, 3); as the angel of the Lord, sent to prepare the way before His face (Mal. III., 1). He appeared in the spirit of Elias, full of zeal for the cause of God. He was clad in a garb of camel's hair; wild honey and locusts were his daily food. The desert was his home, the broad expanse of heaven his temple of worship, the hard earth his couch of nightly repose. Penance was written upon his every feature, penance was the burden of his every utterance. He taught with the authority of a prophet; he rebuked with the power of one commis-

sioned from on high. People came to him and listened; they listened and repented of their evil ways; they repented and were cleansed in the baptism of penance. They took him for the long Expected of nations; for the Christ who was to bring salvation unto all the people. Yet "he was not the light, but was to give testimony of the light." As he himself put it, he only baptized with water unto penance, but there was even then One standing in their midst, who would baptize them in the Holy Ghost and fire (Matt. III., 11). This one "was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own and his own received him not. But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And this One was the Word, who in the beginning was with God, and who was God.

Thus by a direct statement of the truth as revealed to him, and by an appeal to facts known as true, does the Evangelist make it clear beyond all cavil, that the Word was from all eternity, that He was

generated by the Father and therefore True God. It is true, in the first and second part of the Prologue, he does not state in explicit terms that the Word is the Son of God; but he implies it so evidently that an explicit statement would be superfluous. Hence in the third part, as we shall see presently, he calls the Word, without any further explanation, the Only Begotten of the Father. What he wishes to impress upon his readers above all else, and what for this reason he specially emphasizes, is the fundamental fact that the Word is truly a divine person—that He is truly God, from whom all creatures have their being and to whom all must tend as the end and object of their existence. In this manner he prepares the way for a clear statement of the great truth which he has undertaken to set forth, namely, "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

This truth he states in the following terms: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." The same Word, who in the beginning was with God, and was God, was in the fullness of time made flesh; or as we would express it in equivalent terms, was made man; for

that is the real meaning of the Hebrew phrase. The Eternal Word, or the Son of God, was made man, not by laying aside His divine attributes, and much less by changing His divine nature into one that was human, but by so uniting to Himself a human nature that it became truly His own:—that He was a divine person who possessed at one and the same time a divine nature and a human nature; so that He was truly God-Man, truly God-Incarnate. In this St. John but reiterates the same truth which St. Paul, as we saw in the preceding discussion, stated some thirty years before in practically the same terms, when he wrote to the Philippians that Christ, "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man" (II, 6. 7). The one asserts that the Word was from all eternity with God and was God, but in time was made flesh; the other states that Jesus Christ, by right of His divine nature, was always in the form of God, but in time was made in the likeness of men. There is a slight verbal difference in the two statements; but the doctrine contained therein is one and the same:—it is the first and most fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith; for he only

is a true Christian who believes "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

It is because this truth is so fundamental, that St. John does not rest satisfied with simply stating it in the sublimely simple words: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," but immediately calls attention to the fact that he and the other disciples saw and recognized the Incarnate Word's divine personality. "And we saw his glory," he says, "the glory as it were of the only begotten, of the Father, full of grace and truth." This glory they saw on Mount Tabor, when Christ was transfigured before them, His face shining like the sun and His garments being white as snow; they saw it in the works of divine power, which He wrought in their presence, healing all manner of diseases and by His mere word raising the dead from their graves; they saw it after the dark night of His sufferings, when He rose by His own power from the tomb and appeared before them as the conqueror over death and sin:—it was the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, who, when His mission of mercy was accomplished, ascended in triumph to heaven, there to reign forever upon the very throne of God, the King of angels and of men. By this appeal to undeniable facts, the Evangelist desires to

place his doctrine, as contained in this Prologue, upon a firm historic basis, so that no one may be led into the fatal error of regarding his statements as mere poetic effusions, practically devoid of all doctrinal value, but that all may have the fullest assurance that they are God's own revelation to the children of His love.

Furthermore, in order to make it quite clear that the Word Incarnate is none other than Jesus of Nazareth, he forthwith introduces the testimony of John the Baptist, who, he says, "beareth witness of him, and crieth out saying: This was he of whom I spoke. He that shall come after me, is preferred before me: because he was before me. . . . And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him, to ask him: Who art thou? And he confessed, and did not deny: and he confessed: I am not the Christ. . . . The next day, John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world. This is he, of whom I said: After me there cometh a man, who is preferred before me: because he was before me—And I knew him not; but he who sent me to baptize with water, said to me: He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon him, he

it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and I gave testimony, that this is the Son of God" (I, 15-34). Hence all that the Evangelist has said about the Word, he himself applies, and he wishes his readers to apply to Jesus of Nazareth, of whom the Baptist bore witness that He "is the Son of God." He teaches indeed that Jesus is true man for "the Word was made flesh:" but he teaches also, and that with special emphasis, that Jesus is true God, consubstantial with the Father. Jesus is the Word Incarnate, and the Word was in the beginning with God, and the Word was God. It was His divine power that called all creation into being; it is His divine wisdom and love that leads all creatures to their appointed end. He is the beginning and end of all things; at once man's creator and man's Saviour:—the Only Begotten of the Father, who dwelt among men.

Such then is the teaching of the disciple whom Jesus loved. Such the faith of the last surviving Apostle, as stated by himself in the opening lines of his Gospel. Such the faith of him who for three years was associated with Jesus on terms of the most intimate friendship; who saw His Master's every action, heard His every word, and, with the exception of Christ's own Blessed

Mother, had a deeper insight into the mysteries of that Master's personality than was ever vouchsafed to any living person. To Him Jesus of Nazareth is the Word Incarnate, and the Word Incarnate is the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

# Historical Basis of St. John's Faith.

The central thought of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, is the divinty of the Word Incarnate. St. John is at great pains to make this clear to his readers, purposing, as is commonly believed, to counteract certain heresies then springing into existence, which attributed to Christ a sort of inferior divinity. He first points to the fact that the Word had no beginning, but was in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, and that therefore He does not belong to a class of beings that are made:—nay, he infers directly from this that the Word was truly divine; for he concludes his first statement by saying: "And the Word was God." Then to set forth this truth in still bolder relief, he calls attention to the fact that the Word is the Creator of all things, so that "without him was made nothing that was made." From the Word, therefore, all creation has its being; the Word's almighty power called the whole world and all that it contains out of nothingness, and hence the

Word must necessarily be identical with the Supreme God. In the next place, after briefly explaining how the Word was present in the world from the very beginning as the light and life of men, he brings before his readers the mystery of the Incarnation in the sublimely simple words: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" immediately adding that the "Word made Flesh" is Jesus of Nazareth, of whom John the Baptist bore witness, that "He is the Son of God."

In this Prologue, therefore, we have a clear statement of St. John's faith in the divinity of Christ. It is a statement as clear and definite and absolute as was ever put forth in the definitions of any Council. Such a statement is in itself of the highest doctrinal value; for it gives us an insight into the hearts and minds of those who had come in personal contact with the Saviour during the years of His earthly existence: but its value is enhanced by the fact that it is made by a disciple who, as his writings abundantly show, had penetrated most deeply into the mysteries of his Master's personality. He was the disciple whom Jesus loved, and from him nothing whatever had been withheld, either of his Master's glory and power or of His humiliations and infirmities. As

he had been a witness of the transfiguration on Mount Tabor, so was he also a witness of the agony in the garden of Gethsemane; as he had reclined on his Master's bosom in the Supper Room, so did he also stand under the cross on Calvary. He saw Christ in His death, and he saw Christ in His risen life:—he of all others could truly say: "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the word of life: . . . we declare unto you" (I John I, 1-3). Hence as was stated before, "if there were nothing else to the purpose in the whole New Testament, the first fourteen verses of the Fourth Gospel would be sufficient to persuade a believer in Holy Scripture that Jesus is absolutely God."

However as it is not the purpose of these discussions to set forth the divinity of Christ for those only who believe in Holy Scripture, or who accept Holy Scripture as a book inspired by God; but also for such as reject the very idea of inspiration and are willing only to consider the Sacred Writings from an historical point of view, it is necessary to examine the arguments which St. John advances for the profession of faith prefixed to his Gospel. That he did not mean to impose his faith

upon others without placing before them the proofs upon which that faith rested, is quite evident from the Prologue itself, which concludes with the significant words: "And we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Hence in the present chapter we shall consider some of these proofs which induced the Evangelist to believe and to testify "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." I say some of these proofs, for if we would consider them all, we should have to examine the whole Gospel, as there is hardly a chapter in the entire narrative that does not advance some evidence of Christ's divine personality.

And here I might remark that St. John seems to be very partial to a class of arguments which modern Rationalists consider the only ones that have real weight. In these days of deep psychological research, we are constantly referred to the consciousness of Christ. The one question that is ever upon the lips of Bible critics is, What did Christ think of Himself? What manner of man did He consider Himself to be? What precise claim did He put forward as regarded His relation to the Father? Could we but be certain of this, they say, our minds would be set

at rest forever; because if Christ really believed that He was God, and if He undoubtedly claimed that He was God, then we have no choice but to accept and worship Him as such. For a more enlightened mind than Christ's was never found in mortal man, and greater holiness than Christ's never adorned a human soul; and it is, they tell us, plainly inconceivable that a man of His intellectual eminence, and of His moral perfection, should either have mistaken His own personal identity or should have claimed for Himself a dignity which He knew was not His. So argue our modern Rationalists, and so likewise St. John seems to have argued, although, unlike these Rationalists, he did not rest his conclusion upon this argument alone.

As a first instance of this argumentation, we may take what St. John has recorded in the fifth chapter of his Gospel. On a certain festival day Jesus came to Jerusalem, and there at the Pool of Probatica He found a man who had been suffering from an infirmity for thirty-eight years. "Him when Jesus saw lying, and knew that he had been now a long time, he saith to him: Wilt thou be made whole? The infirm man answered him: Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put

me into the pond. For whilst I come, another goeth down before me. Jesus saith to him: Arise, take up thy bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole: and he took up his bed and walked. And it was Sabbath that day" (V, 1-9).

Now when the Jews learned what Jesus had done, they were incensed against Him; because He had healed on the Sabbath day, which according to their views and traditions was against the law. Jesus did not excuse Himself, or argue that in case of necessity the law of keeping holy the Sabbath might be dispensed with, but He simply stated that He as the Son of God was Lord of the Sabbath, and that therefore He might set aside the law according to His own good pleasure. "My father," He tells the murmuring crowd, "worketh until now; and I work." That is to say, "God, who is my Father, is not bound by the law regulating the observance of the Sabbath and neither am I; because as His Son, I share in all His rights and prerogatives." When the Jews heard this, "they sought to kill him," says the Evangelist, "because he did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God" (18). As they understood Him, Jesus claimed that

He was the Son of God in such a sense that He Himself was a divine person, and therefore True God, having the same divine nature as Jehovah. They did not believe that His claim was true, yet what that claim was they understood perfectly well. It was a clear and open assertion of His divinity, and therefore they sought to kill Him; because to usurp the place of God was blasphemy, which according to their law must be punished with death.

Of course, the objection might be raised that the Jews misinterpreted Christ's words; that they attached a meaning to Christ's words which He did not intend to convey: yet such an objection would be wholly unfounded, as is clearly shown by the context. For when Jesus saw that He had been understood to claim equality with the Father, He did not tell them that they had mistaken His meaning, but, on the contrary, He insisted that they had understood Him rightly and that His claim was true. He tells them plainly: "What things soever the Father doth, these the Son also doth in like manner. . . For as the Father raiseth the dead, and giveth life: so the Son also giveth life to whom he will" (21). As if He had said: "You accuse me of blasphemy, because I claim to be equal to the Father; yet why should I not be

equal to the Father in nature, when I am equal to Him in power? Whatever the Father can do, I also can do. As the Father is the source and origin of life, so am I; as the Father raises up the dead, so do I; as the Father is omnipotent, so am I: if therefore I am equal to Him in power, does it not logically follow that I am equal to Him in nature? If I do the works that only God can do, am I guilty of blasphemy when I say that I am God? Yes, I claim to be God, and my works show that my claim is true." And to bring the truth of this claim home to them, He continues: "If I bear witness to myself, my witness is not true," that is, you will not receive it as true, because it is given by myself. "There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. You sent to John, and he gave testimony to the truth. But I receive not testimony from any man: but I say these things that you may be saved. . . But I have a greater testimony than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to perfect; the works themselves, which I do, give testimony of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself who hath sent me, hath given testimony of me" (31-37).

Thus He not only claims that He is God, one in nature with the Father, but He severely rebukes the Jews for their incredulity in regard to His claim. They knew what works He had done, and ordinary common sense ought to have told them that such works could not be done by any man. He had shown to evidence that He was absolute master over life and death:— at a mere word from His mouth, at a mere act of His will, the most inveterate diseases were healed on the instant; nay, the very dead rose from their graves. These works had been pointed out by the prophets of old as the infallible credentials whereby the Messiah was to prove His divine mission, as the outward signs whereby all might know that He was "God the Mighty." The Jews had seen these works, they had heard Christ's claim, yet they believed neither the one nor the other; they were so steeped in worldliness, they were so overruled by selfish ambition, that their eyes were blinded to the most striking manifestation of the truth. It was on account of this culpable blindness that Christ added so pointedly: "Search the scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting: and the same are they that give testimony of me. . . Think not that I will accuse you

to the Father. There is one that accuseth you, Moses, in whom you trust. For if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe me also: for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (39-47).

Again, to make it doubly clear to them that His equality with the Father implied nothing less than that He was absolutely God, He tells them then and there that He is entitled to divine honors and that men must worship Him as their God. "For," He says, "neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son. That all men may honour the Son, as they honour the Father. He who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father, who hath sent Him" (*22, 23*). To honour Jehovah as the one and sole God of heaven and earth was the special calling and the very life of the Jewish people. The Temple at Jerusalem was the centre of His worship; there the blood of victims flowed almost without ceasing; there the Jews were required by law to offer the firstlings of the flock and the first fruits of the field in recognition of His supreme dominion; to neglect that worship drew after it the severest penalties, to dishonour Jehovah meant death; He was to them the Lord God of Sabaoth, the Most High,

whose name they did not dare to utter:—and yet Jesus tells them that they must honour Him as they honour Jehovah; they must make Him the object of religious worship; they must adore Him as their God. No wonder that the Jews sought to kill Him; for logically they could do only one of two things, either acknowledge His claim that He was God, and then they must needs worship Him as they worshipped Jehovah, or deny His claim as an unjust usurpation of divine rights, and then they must brand Him as a blasphemer, who according to the law should be stoned to death. In their worldliness and pride, the first alternative was not to be thought of, and therefore they embraced the second, seeking to kill Him, "because he did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God."

Another incident very much like the present, but which brings out Christ's claim even more strongly, is recorded by the Evangelist in the tenth chapter. In the beginning of that chapter, Christ speaks of Himself as the Good Shepherd, setting forth in language the most touching, how He loves His sheep even to the sacrifice of His life. "I am the good shepherd," He tells the Jews who are gathered about

Him, "The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. . . I am the good shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd. Therefore doth the Father love me: because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me: but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it up again" (11-18). When the Jews heard this, they began disputing among themselves; some being scandalized at His words, whilst others were in admiration of the same. Some said: "He hath a devil, and is mad;" but others maintained: "These are not the words of one that hath a devil: can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" (19-21). And they could not come to an agreement concerning Christ and His doctrine.

In this perplexity, they addressed themselves directly to Christ, and said to Him: "How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly" (24). It was in a manner a most unreasonable request; because Christ had

told them over and over again, not only that He was the Christ, that is, the Messiah, but also that He was their God, whom they were in conscience bound to honour even as they honoured the Father. In fact, so clear and definite had been His statements that on account of them they had unhesitatingly accused Him of blasphemy, because, they said, He made Himself equal to God. Hence instead of answering them directly, He first calls their attention to their unreasonable incredulity, which neither His words nor His works seemed able to overcome. "I speak to you," He tells them, "and you believe me not: the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me. But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep" (25-26).

It was a sharp, though well merited rebuke, and it ought to have opened the eyes of these unbelieving Jews to the dangers of the path which they were following. Christ tells them plainly that they shall have no share in the fruits of the Redemption, because they refuse to listen to His voice. He will lay down His life for His sheep; He will make salvation possible for all: but only such as are of good will, of honest and sincere purpose, can profit by the sacrificial outpouring of His

blood. On another occasion He had told the Scribes and Pharisees that many should come from the East and the West and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom, that is, the unbelieving Jews, should be cast out into the exterior darkness; and now He repeats that same warning, by telling them that they are not of His sheep.

Having thus rebuked them for their incredulity, He proceeds to give them the answer which they had demanded. And first of all He points out to them that He has power to keep His followers from all harm, and to bestow upon them eternal life. "My sheep," He says, "hear my voice: and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of my hand." The Jews knew well that the only one who could confer the recompense of life everlasting was Jehovah, whom they worshipped as the one True God of heaven and earth. Hence they could not fail to understand that Christ again urged the identical claim which He had put before them on a former occasion. Nor did He leave them in any doubt about this; for He immediately added: "That which my Father hath

given me, is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of my Father. I and the Father are one." That is to say, "the reason why I can safeguard my followers, and give them everlasting life, is simply this, that I have the same power as my Father, of whom you say that He is your God. No one can snatch them out of His hand, because He is the Lord of all; neither can anyone snatch them out of my hand, because I am also the Lord of all. And I, no less than my Father, am the Lord of all, because "I and the Father are one."

They had asked Him to tell them plainly, whether He was the Christ; but His answer went beyond their question. He not only acknowledged that He was the Christ, that is, the promised Messiah, but He told them with emphasis that He was also their God. For when He said, "I and the Father are one," He could mean nothing else than that He had the same divine nature as the Father. It was this oneness of nature between Him and the Father that was the source of His divine power. He could safeguard His followers, because the Father could; He could bestow life everlasting, because the Father could:—He could do all that the Father could do, because He and the Father were one:—they

were two distinct divine persons, but they were one God, because both had the same divine nature.

There was no misunderstanding this statement; nor did the Jews misunderstand it: for when they heard this, says the Evangelist, they "took up stones to stone Him." Jesus, however, restrained them by that absolute power which He always could exercise at will, even over His most relentless enemies; and when they had quieted down somewhat, He said to them: "Many good works I have shewed you of my Father; for which of those works do you stone me?" He knew quite well why they sought to kill Him, but in His compassionate love for even the most hardened sinners, He wished to offer them another opportunity of viewing His claim in the light shed upon it by the works of love and mercy and power which He had wrought in their midst. He had constantly gone about doing good to all; He had healed them when they were sick; He had fed them when they were hungry; He had consoled them when they were afflicted and in sorrow; He had spoken to them of the love and mercy of God, and had encouraged them to strive after the eternal joys of heaven by leading a life of virtue and contentment:—from His first appearance in their midst even

to the present moment, His life had been but an uninterrupted manifestation of the infinite goodness of God, and now He asks them, not in anger as He might well have done, but in pity and compassion: "For which of those good works do you stone me?"

Had the Jews been sincere in their request that He should tell them plainly whether He was the Christ, this reference to His works of mercy and love ought certainly have induced them to give His claim due consideration; but like so many thousand others, who have ever since followed their examples, they shut their eyes to all reason and persisted in persecuting Him as a blasphemer. Hence they answered: "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy: and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (33). His good works they could not deny; they were known to all the people; every hamlet and city bore witness to His mission of mercy and love. Nor yet could they or did they deny the works of divine power which He had wrought in the sight of all:—the blind to whom He had given sight, the lepers whom He had cleansed, the dead whom He had raised to life:—all these were living witnesses to the absolute dominion which He possessed over the whole realm of na-

ture. No, His works they could not deny; but neither would they accept them as credentials of His divine mission; they preferred to ascribe them to the agency of the devil, although no man in his sane mind could seriously credit the devil with works that breathed the very spirit of God. For a good work, therefore, they would not stone Him, but for blasphemy, because He, being a man, made Himself God.

One would think that after this failure to bring them to a more reasonable frame of mind, Christ would have left them to their fate and gone His way; but no, as He claimed to be God, so did He also act as God. He had come to save all, and therefore He would do all in His power to make that salvation effective. Hence He argued with them, patiently trying to show them from the law which they so highly esteemed that His claim was perfectly just. Answering their accusation, He said: "Is it not written in your law: I said you are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God was spoken, and the scripture cannot be broken; do you say of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" The Jews were incensed against Christ because He claimed to be God, yet in their Sacred Books their

own judges were called gods; how much more truly and justly could He make use of that name, as He was the only begotten of the Father, whereas the judges were only men? It is true, these judges were called gods in an improper sense, being merely God's representatives in their office of dispensing justice; whilst He claimed to be God in the strict sense of the term, but in this He was justified by the fact that He had the same divine nature as the Father. And then to bring home to them the undeniable truth that He was one with the Father, He once more appeals to His works, saying: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (34-39). Yet it was all in vain; no matter what He might do or what He might say, they would not have Him as their God, and so they again sought to apprehend Him, but He turned away from them, deeply grieved, as we may well suppose, at their blindness and hardness of heart.

In these two instances, as in so many others recorded by St. John, Jesus claimed openly and with emphasis that He was the Son of God, that He was equal to the Father, and that He was True God. He

rested His claim not only upon His own consciousness, but also upon testimony that was accessible to all and that could not be called in question by any man of sincere purpose. The prophets had foretold His coming; they had outlined His life and character, and their predictions were being fulfilled point by point until the prophetic vision had become an actual living reality. His works were such as only God could do, and they were wrought for the express purpose to accredit His divine mission and to show forth the fullness of His Godhead. Hence He well said, "I have a greater testimony than that of John;" His divine mission and personality were attested by God Himself, who cannot be deceived nor yet deceive others. Any man in his right mind ought to know that nothing short of God's omnipotent power could call the dead from their graves or by a mere act of the will give sight to persons that were born blind. Yet Jesus had done all this; He had done it in the presence of hundreds and of thousands, and that for the express purpose of showing that He was God. Hence if His claim had not been legitimate, if He had falsely given Himself out as God whereas He was only man, God Himself must be accused of having testified to a lie, and God Himself must be

held responsible for the subsequent idolatry. Truly, He has "a greater testimony than that of John."

Now, with these facts before us, need we be surprised that St. John should have prefixed to his Gospel that magnificent profession of faith, which is usually spoken of as the Prologue? Had he not every reason to say: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"? And had he not every reason to add: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth?" Rationalists tell us that if they could be certain that Christ claimed He was God, they also would believe in His Godhead; hence even if St. John had begun as a Rationalist, he must logically have ended as a firm believer in Christ's divinity. For he was associated with Christ for three years; he was present on every occasion when Christ claimed that He was God; he heard not only the claim itself, but also the reason which Christ advanced for the truth of His claim; and therefore if he believed Christ to be honest and sincere, if he considered Him to be mentally sane and endowed with ordinary common sense, he could do nothing else but accept

Christ's explicit declaration, repeated over and over again, that He was True God and consubstantial with the Father. He had listened to the words of wisdom that ever flowed from Christ's sacred lips, and therefore he knew that Christ was not labouring under a misconception; he had been a constant witness of Christ's holiness of life and singleness of purpose, and therefore he was convinced that Christ was not a deceiver:—hence if any man's word concerning his own identity could be admitted, then he must admit the claim of Christ. An unbiased mind could not do less.

Furthermore, it was not only upon Christ's consciousness, as manifested in the direct statement of His claims, that St. John's faith in his Master's divinity was based. As a reasonable man, whose mind was not biased by preconceived philosophical notions, he could not help realizing what was the bearing of Christ's works of divine power upon the validity of His claim. He was the daily witness of deeds, which no unprejudiced mind could conceive of as being merely human, or of being the effects of some occult power contained within the limits of the finite. He knew what it meant, when Jesus said to the disciples of the Baptist: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the

lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the Gospel is preached" (Luke, VII, 22). No man that was not sent by God, or who falsely claimed that he was a divine person, could possess such unlimited powers, or could be allowed by God to use them in confirmation of his claim. St. John believed, as every sane man must believe, that there is an infinitely holy God, who cannot be made the abettor of evil. He had stood at the grave of Lazarus, where Jesus openly declared that He would call the dead man back to life, in order that all might believe in His own divine mission. He had heard the voice of omnipotence bid Lazarus to come forth, and he had seen that same Lazarus arise from the corruption of the grave and come forth a living man. He had heard Christ say to the roaring tempest and the tossing waves, "Be still," and he saw how there was immediately a great calm, He had seen Christ stretch forth His hand in blessing over five barley loaves and two fishes, and forthwith there was an abundance of food to fill five thousand hungry men. Day after day, for three long years, he had seen Jesus exercise an unlimited and absolute power over all the forces of nature, and he had heard over and over again how that same Jesus pointed to these works as

a proof of His divinity; hence as a reasonable man, who was willing to see the truth and to give testimony to the same, he could do nothing else but believe in Christ and adore Him as his God, and then bear witness to Him in the Gospel which he found it advisable to write.

# The Christ of the Early Church.

That the writings of the New Testament bear unequivocal testimony to the divinity of Christ is, I think, sufficiently clear from what has been said in the preceding chapters. Even the three earliest Evangelists were so deeply impressed by the divine personality of the Saviour, that they did not hesitate to make it the foundation of their narrative, in as much as they constantly represent Christ as holding a position of independent and absolute authority that belongs to God alone The same must be said of St Paul, who moreover, as occasion required, made explicit declaration of Christ's divinity, and enforced that declaration by arguments which no unbiased mind could refuse to accept. That a similar position is taken by the other New Testament writers, such as St. Peter, St. James, St. Jude, and the Author of the Acts, a mere reading of their respective writings is sufficient to convince anyone who sincerely wishes to learn the truth. And lastly St. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, put the whole matter in so clear a light, that no one has as yet dared to suggest any other interpretation than the one that was accepted

from the very first, namely, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Hence whosoever admits that the New Testament has real historical value, must also admit that Christ is truly a divine person—a God Incarnate.

Now this being the case, one would naturally suppose that the divinity of Christ was one of those fundamental truths which the Church from the very beginning of her existence put before her children as an indubitable fact of divine revelation. For how can it possibly be supposed that the Apostles and first disciples of Christ should have considered and adored him as their God, and not have communicated that faith to their converts and established that worship in the various communities which they founded? Such a supposition is on the face of it most unreasonable, and cannot be made except by persons who are determined to rule belief in Christ's divinity out of the world at all hazards. Yet Rationalists and Modernists tell us that the Early Church did not know her own mind in regard to Christ's divine personality. They will have it that during the first three centuries of her existence, the Church allowed her children to look upon Christ as a sort of inferior deity, who was indeed above all created things, yet was not strict-

ly and absolutely divine as was God the Father. It was, they say, only at the Council of Nice, held in the year 325, that belief in Christ's absolute divinity was required of all who wished to become members of the Church. Until then the Church had advanced no definite view concerning the matter, and the faithful were left more or less to their own speculations.

In view of this extraordinary statement, it seems necessary to examine somewhat in detail, as far as that can be done in one short chapter, the records that have come down to us of those early times, and determine whether or not the Church then taught, as she teaches to-day, that Christ is True God of True God, consubstantial with the Father. This may at first sight appear to be a rather formidable undertaking, yet as you will notice in the course of the discussion, the matter may easily be handled in such a way as to make it intelligible to all and to derive from it very satisfactory results.

As is readily admitted on all hands, and as is quite evident from the nature of the case, the faith of the Church, at any given time, can be ascertained from her teaching, from her worship, and from the persecutions which her children are made to endure on account of their religious belief.

Any one of these three sources of information is of itself sufficient to remove all doubt as regards the most essential and fundamental points, and if they are all taken together, the entire doctrinal system must needs be revealed in all its fullness. It is therefore along these lines that we shall make our inquiries in the present instance.

In regard to the first source it may be remarked, that the teaching of the Early Church appears mainly in her symbols, or professions of faith, in the writings of her representative men, and in the manner in which she dealt with heretics. From the very first it was the custom to require of converts a profession of faith, which was to be made before they received baptism. To facilitate this profession, and to secure uniformity, a set formula was adopted which contained the most fundamental truths then taught by the church. The formula which was used in the first three centuries has been preserved for us, at least in part, by St. Justin (Apol. I, 61, 1), by Tertullian (De Praescript. C. 36), and by St. Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. I, 10), all of whom lived and wrote in the second century. It is now commonly acknowledged by critics that this formula dates from a period not later than the end of the first century, and although it seems to have

had its origin in Rome, in substance at least it was common to all churches both in the East and in the West. Now, in this formula, we read: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was born by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary" (Denz. 1, 2). Hence every one who wished to be admitted into the Church, had to make an explicit declaration of faith in the divine sonship of Christ. He must believe that Christ is the Only Son of God; not therefore a son in the sense that all just men are the children of God, but in a very special sense, which made Him one in nature with the Father. The term, "His only Son," as here employed, is identical with the expression used by St. Paul, when he wrote to the Romans that Christ was God's "own Son," and with the statement found in St. John's Gospel, that Christ is "the Only Begotten of the Father." It is identical with the corresponding article of faith in our own Creed, for we say to-day as did the Christians of the first three centuries: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Eighteen hundred years separate us from these early con-

verts to the faith, but the faith in Christ's divinity and its outward expression have remained unaltered. As we believe that Christ is True God, consubstantial with the Father, so did they, and so did the Church that brought them forth to Christ in baptism. They were baptized, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Didache, c. 7), and they publicly professed their faith in the three divine persons of the One Triune God. Modern theorizers may attempt to deny this, but the testimony of history is unquestionably against them, and as they themselves never tire of telling us, the testimony of history must be accepted by all reasonable men.

Not less convincing than the testimony of this early symbol is the unanimous teaching of the Church's most representative men as preserved to us in their writings. Thus at the end of the first century St. Clement of Rome reminds the Corinthians that Jesus Christ is True God as had been foretold in the Second Psalm, where Jehovah is represented as saying to the Messiah: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (c. 36). A few years later, St. Ignatius of Antioch calls Jesus Christ "my God," "our God," "Jesus Christ our God," he writes to the Ephesians, "was

carried in the womb of Mary" (c. 18). St. Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years later, maintains that the Word is the First born of God, and as such True God; that He appeared in the Old Testament as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (I Apol. 63); and that the reality of His sonship is of itself sufficient evidence of His true divinity (Ibid.). Towards the end of the second century St. Athanagoras of Athens writes in his Apology to the Roman Emperor, "Not only is the Father God, but also the Son and the Holy Spirit. In these three divine persons there is unity of Godhead, and in this unity of Godhead there is distinction of persons (c. 20). About the same time St. Irenaeus of Lyons argues, "If Christ forgives sins, if Christ is Mediator between God and man, this is because He is really a divine person" (Adv. Haer. III, 9, 2). Similar language is used by Tertullian of Carthage, by St. Hippolyte of Rome, by Origen and Clement of Alexandria, by Melito of Sardis, by St. Methodius of Tyre, and in fact by every writer of that period who had occasion to refer to this matter, and whose writings have been preserved. Among those who made profession of being members of the Church of Christ, there is not a dissentient voice as regards the Saviour's divine personality. They one and

all confess and teach that He is the Son of God, one with the Father in nature and distinct from Him as a person.

Now think for a moment what this means. Taken together, these writers represent every rank and station in the Church as it then existed:—some were bishops, others priests, others simple laymen. Some were engaged in the education of the young; others carried on the work of evangelization; others again followed the ordinary pursuits of life. Some were highly educated, whilst others had but little more information than the common people. Furthermore, they represent practically all the different countries and nations that had in any way received the Gospel. Europe, Asia and Africa, which made up the then known world, supplied each their quota of witnesses to the faith, as it was then taught by the Church and held by the people. Hence their teaching is necessarily a true index of the teaching of the Church herself, and their faith must needs have been identical with the faith of the Church.

That this was really the case, appears moreover to evidence from the manner in which the Church dealt with heretics, or persons who presumed to call in question Christ's true and absolute divinity. Thus when toward the end of the first century,

a certain Cerinthus asserted that Jesus of Nazareth was not the Son of God, but only of Mary and Joseph, and that therefore He was not True God, the whole Church rose up in arms against him, and he was shunned by the faithful as a blasphemer and an apostate (S. Irenaeus, Ad. Haer. V). It was the same when the Gnostics, and later on the Arians assigned to Christ a middle place between the highest angels and the Supreme God, and thus made of Him a sort of inferior deity. The entire Church branded them forthwith as renegades, who had apostatized from the faith preached by the Apostles. So fundamental did the Early Church consider the belief in Christ's absolute divinity, that a denial of it ipso facto separated a man from her communion. It was then even as it is now, the mark of a true Christian was instinctively looked for in a man's unhesitating belief that Christ was true God. As a modern writer, who is not a Catholic, well puts it, "the truth of Christ's absolute Godhead was beyond doubt the very central feature of the teaching of the ante-Nicene Church, even when Church teachers had not yet recognized all that it necessarily involved, and had not yet elaborated the accurate statement of its relationship to other truths around it." (Liddon, p. 432). To say that the Church

had not made up her mind on this fundamental point of doctrine, argues either a colossal ignorance of history, or a state of intellectual blindness that finds its explanation only in the most unreasonable prejudice. In those early days, men might use, as in fact they did, many vague and misleading expressions in their efforts to explain the mutual relations of God the Father and God the Son, but that the central fact of the Son's true and absolute divinity was ever called in question by a sincere church member, or that it was a matter of doubt to the Church herself, is historically false and cannot be truthfully maintained by anyone who has carefully read the records of the ante-Nicene Church. The very fact that the faithful instinctively regarded every denial of Christ's divinity as an apostasy from God, puts this beyond all doubt.

And what we thus learn from the teaching of the Early Church, as expressed in her symbols, in the writings of her most representative men, and in her firm opposition to heretics, stands out with even greater clearness in the worship which she paid to Christ and which she demanded from all the faithful. As in her baptismal rite she consecrated her children to the One Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy

Ghost, so did she gather these same children around her altars, bidding them to unite with her in the solemn act of adoration which had for its direct object, not only the Father and the Holy Spirit, but also the Son, Christ Jesus, who in His human nature had suffered and died for the sins of the world. A document written toward the end of the first century, and known to students as the Didache, clearly states that the Christians came together every Sunday morning for the purpose of offering sacrifice to the Godhead by the oblation of Christ's body and blood, as the Saviour had taught and commanded His disciples at the Last Supper (cc. 9, 14). The same practice is stated, and to some extent described, by St. Justin in his First Apology (n. 67), and by Pliny the Younger in his report to the Emperor Trajan, who moreover adds that on these occasions the Christians were in the habit of offering prayers and singing hymns to Christ as their God (Epist. 97). It was in fact the celebration of Mass, in all essentials the same as observed to-day in the Catholic Church all the world over. What were the different prayers used on these occasions, cannot now be determined in detail; yet two of them have come down to us almost unchanged, and both pay divine honors to Christ. The first of these

is the "Tersanctus," or "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Saboath," part of which prayer every Catholic priest recites to-day at the end of the Preface in the celebration of Mass. The other one is that beautiful hymn known as the "Gloria in Excelsis," which is said at the beginning of the Mass on all feast days of the year. This, moreover, as we learn from contemporary records, formed the ordinary morning prayer of the primitive Christians; and what a beautiful prayer it is! "How wonderfully does it blend the appeal to our Lord's human sympathies with the confession of his divine prerogatives: 'O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, That takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.' How thrilling is the burst of praise, which at last drowns the plaintive notes of entreaty that have preceded it, and hails Jesus glorified on His throne in the heights of heaven! 'For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father'" (Liddon, p. 394). It is an explicit profession of faith in Christ the Redeemer, not only as man, but also as God—as a God Incarnate.

Closely related to this beautiful hymn, which is technically known as the Major

Doxology, or the greater hymn of praise, is another prayer, which is usually designated as the Minor Doxology, or the shorter hymn of praise. This too, was in common use from the very beginning of Christianity, even as it is used to-day by every devout Christian. Its wording is: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost." In this one and the same glory is given to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, and therefore all three are equally worshiped as divine persons. It is an implicit profession of faith in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, and as such the formula itself is necessarily expressive of the belief of those who piously use it. Hence as it was used from the very earliest times, both by the learned and the unlearned, it is a standing witness to the faith of the primitive Christians. As they were baptized in the name of the Triune God, so did they publicly profess their faith in the equal Godhead of all three divine persons.

As one would naturally suppose, this worship of Christ, as well as the common practice of addressing prayers to Him, finds frequent mention in the writing of the Early Fathers. Thus St. Ignatius of Antioch, at the beginning of the second century, bids the Roman Christians "put up supplications to Christ on his behalf that

he might attain the distinction of martyrdom." (Rom. c. 4). St. Polycarp, a few years later, whilst bound to the stake to be consumed by fire, uttered this short but beautiful prayer preserved by the early Christians: "For all things, O God, do I praise and bless Thee, together with the Eternal and Heavenly Jesus Christ, Thy well-beloved Son, with Whom, to Thee and the Holy Ghost, be glory, both now and forever. Amen." (Mart. Polyc. c. 14.) After his death, some Jews spread the rumor that the Church at Smyrna of which he had been bishop, would abandon the worship of Christ and henceforth worship Polycarp in His stead. The Church authorities answered this charge in a circular letter, in which among other statements we read: "They know not that neither shall we ever be able to desert Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all who are saved in the whole world, nor yet to worship any other. For Him indeed, as being the Son of God, we do adore; but the martyrs, as disciples and imitators of the Lord, we worthily love by reason of their unsurpassed devotion to Him their own King and Teacher. God grant that we too may be fellow-partakers and fellow-disciples with them." (Ibid. c. 17.) This almost reads as if it had been written by some Catholic of the six-

teenth or seventeenth century, who had set himself the task of refuting the Protestant charge of creature worship, so often urged against the Catholic practice of venerating the Saints. The letter draws a sharp line of demarcation between the tribute of honor accorded to the martyrs and the worship paid to the Redeemer; the one is simply an act of veneration perfectly compatible with created excellence, the other is an act of adoration which is due to God alone.

This point stands out with special clearness in the works of Christian Apologists, who replied to the heathen charge of Atheism. When the Christians refused to worship the false gods of the pagans, they were denounced as Atheists, who did not believe in the existence of higher beings. The Christian writers took up this charge and pointed to the fact that they worshiped the one true God, whose divine nature was common to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Thus St. Justin, toward the middle of the second century, protests to the Emperor that the Christians worship God alone, and in this worship the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost have an equal share. (Apol. I., cc. 6, 17.) Some fifty years later Tertullian grapples with the taunt that the Christians wor-

shiped a man, who had been condemned by the Jewish tribunals. He does not deny or palliate the charge, but justifies the Christian practice. Whatever Christ might be in the opinion of the pagan world, Christians knew Him to be of one substance with the Father. (Apol. c. 21.) In another place he argues against mixed marriages, and the one reason which he advances against them is, that there could be no joint worship of the Redeemer. (Ad. Uxor, II., 6.) It was at that time that Origen, the greatest of early Christian writers, defended the worship of Christ against Celsus, a scoffing pagan philosopher. Celsus contended that "the Christians had no right to denounce the polytheism of the pagan world, since their own worship of Christ was essentially polytheistic. It was absurd in the Christians, he urged, to point at the heathen gods as idols, whilst they worshiped one who was in a much more wretched condition than the idols, and indeed was not even an idol at all, since he was a mere corpse. (Contr. Cels. VII. 40.) "The Christians," he continued, "worshiped no God, no, not even a demon, but only a dead man." (Ibid. 68.) "If they did not wish to worship the pagan gods, why should they not rather pay their devotions to some of their own prophets than to a man who had been cruci-

fied by the Jews?" (Ibid. 53.) In his reply, Origen freely admits the fact that the Christians worshiped the crucified Christ. Nay, he not only admits that prayer to Christ was the universal practice of the Church, but he proceeds forthwith to justify it on the ground that Christ was God. "The gods of the pagans," he tells Celsus, "were unworthy of worship; the Jewish prophets had no claim to it; on the other hand, Christ was worshiped not as a mere man, but as the Son of God, as God Himself." "If Celsus," he continues, "had understood the meaning of this, 'I and the Father are One', or what the Son of God says in His prayer, 'As I and Thou are One,' he would never have imagined that we worship any but the God who is over all; for Christ says, 'The Father is in Me and I in Him.'" (Ibid. VIII., 12,)

A similar position is taken by Lactantius, Arnobius, and other Apologists, who in the first three centuries wrote against the pagan calumniators of Christian worship. They one and all, not only admit, that it was the universal practice of the Church to worship Christ as God, but they justify this practice on the score that Christ had proved His right and title to divine worship, inasmuch as He had demonstrated to evidence that He was God's own Son, equal to the

Father and consubstantial with Him in nature. Hence to say that in the first ages of the Church Christ's divine personality was not a matter of faith is so directly opposed to the most certain testimony of history, that it is altogether unintelligible how any sincere and well read person can find the courage to make such a statement. And yet this statement is made over and over again, and that by men who, at least in their own estimation, constitute the court of final appeal in all matters historical. It is, of course, not for me to judge whether or not they are sincere in maintaining the position which they have so rashly assumed, but if they are, their reputation as historians rests upon a very insecure foundation.

As a last witness to the faith of the Early Church in the divinity of Christ, we may consider that army of Christian martyrs, who preferred to be torn limb from limb rather than surrender the faith which the Church had bestowed upon them as their most precious heritage. Their testimony is of exceptional value, because at the moment of death, when eternity with its everlasting weal or woe steps into the foreground, man does not indulge in idle fancies, or stubbornly maintain a position which he knows to be insecure. Add to this that in the case of these martyrs, denial of faith in Christ

would have given them life and liberty and all sorts of earthly preferments whilst fidelity to that same faith not only meant death, but death under a form so terrible, that it almost freezes the blood in our veins simply to read of it in the records that describe their sufferings. Just imagine yourselves, if you can, in their place: stretched upon a rack, bedded upon a couch of fire, or nailed to the cross, with the alternative before you either to denounce your faith in Christ's divinity, or to endure the torture for hours and hours, until amid the jeers and jibes of a scoffing mob an ignominious death snatched you from the insatiable fury of your persecutors. Would you persevere in the confession of your faith, if that faith had not become your very life for time and for eternity? Yet vast multitudes of Christians gladly submitted to this bloody ordeal for no other reason than to remain faithful to Christ in death, whom they had learned to adore as their God during life. Men and women and children, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, bore this testimony to Christ without ever a thought of purchasing their life and liberty at the cost of their faith in His Godhead. The Church had taught them that Christ was True God; they believed this teaching with their whole soul, and to keep their faith

intact, they gave up their bodies to tortures that beggar description. Theirs is a testimony that will live till the end of time; "their voices reach us across the chasm of intervening centuries; but time cannot impair the moral majesty, or weaken the accents of their strong and simple conviction."

In order to realize what it meant to these martyrs thus to defend their faith in Christ, we must read the account of their sufferings as handed down by eye-witnesses, who recorded the terrible scenes at which they themselves had been present. Among the many accounts that have thus been preserved, the following, which critics admit to be genuine, may serve as a sample. Euplius, a deacon of the Church at Catena had been brought before the Prefect Calvisianus on the charge of being a Christian. The Prefect endeavored to win him over to paganism, but when he saw that all his entreaties and promises were in vain, he ordered the prisoner to be stretched on the rack. "And while being racked, Euplius said: I thank Thee, O Christ. Guard Thou me, who for Thee am suffering thus. The Prefect interrupted him, saying: Cease, Euplius, from this folly. Adore the gods, and thou shalt be set at liberty. Euplius answered: I adore

Christ; I utterly hate the demons. Do what thou wilt: I am a Christian. Add yet other tortures: I am a Christian. After he had been tortured a long while, the executioners were bidden hold their hands: Then the Prefect said: Unhappy man, adore the gods. Pay worship to Mars, Apollo, and Aesculapius. Euplius replied: I worship the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. I adore the Holy Trinity, beside Whom there is no God. Perish the gods who did not make heaven and earth, and all that is in them. I am a Christian. The Prefect again said: Offer sacrifice, if thou wouldst be set at liberty. But Euplius answered: I sacrifice myself only to Christ my God: more than this I cannot do. Thy efforts are to no purpose; I am a Christian. Then orders were given that he should be tortured again; and whilst every bone was wrenched from its socket, he cried out: Thanks to Thee, O Christ. Help me, O Christ. For Thee do I suffer thus O Christ. When finally all his strength had left him and his voice was gone, he still repeated these same exclamations with his lips only." (Ruinart, Acta Mart. p. 439).

Thus died Euplius, confessing his faith in Christ's divinity with his last breath;

and thus died not hundreds and thousands, but millions. They all died bearing witness to Christ the Son of God, as He Himself had foretold when He said to His disciples: Behold I send you as sheep among wolves....For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you will be brought before governors, and before kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles." (Matt. X., 16-18.)

With this, I think we may safely close our inquiry into the faith of the Church during the first three centuries of her existence. That faith stands out as clearly and as well attested as any other fact of history. The open profession of belief in Christ's Godhead which the Church demanded from all who wished to join her communion; the worship which she required all her children to pay to Christ; the unhesitating decision with which she opposed heretics; the unanimous teaching of her most representative men; the dying confessions of her countless martyrs—all without exception testify that she believed and taught that Christ was True God. If this testimony does not give us certainty, then there is no certainty in history; if this testimony is false, then all history is a lie.

## Christ the Light of the World.

In the first chapter of this booklet I made the statement that if the greater part of the civilized world is Christian to-day, it is because the Christ, who was preached by the Apostles and their successors, presented Himself to the acceptance of all, not as a mere man, but as the One True God, before whom every knee must bend in humble adoration. The beauty of His human character won men's love, but it was only the majesty of His Godhead that gained their submission. This statement is, as a matter of course, challenged by Rationalists and Modernists, who endeavor to show that Christ's influence upon the world was entirely owing to the sublimity of His human character. Whatever reformation He effected, they contend, must in the last instance be ascribed to the force of His example, which gave to His ethical teaching an efficacy that but few could withstand. To one who fully understands what the world owes to Christ, this view presents indeed insuperable difficulties, but these men rarely scruple to set aside a difficulty, if it is found to imperil their pet theories. In the present instance it is

quite usual to emphasize beyond measure all that was good in the pagan world, and to minimize whatever tells distinctly in favor of Christianity. This is evidently not a fair method of procedure, but it answers the purpose admirably, and therefore it is made to do service on every possible occasion. I do not say that all Rationalists and Modernists stoop to such methods; but many of them do, and their number is increasing in the same ratio as their position is becoming more untenable.

In view of this, I think it quite appropriate to conclude the present treatise, which from first to last deals with the divinity of Christ, by presenting to you an historical appreciation of the work which Christ has accomplished in the reformation of the world. My purpose in this is not precisely to prove that Christ was God, for that has been proved already in the preceding chapters, but rather to point out that this work of reformation was in itself truly divine, and that therefore it cannot be attributed to a merely human agency. If from other sources we have reason to believe that Christ was truly a divine person, then the reformation which He inaugurated can only confirm us in that belief; although taken by itself some might not consider it decisive. In the present dis-

cussion, therefore, we shall try to determine what Christ has accomplished and what bearing His work has upon His claim that He was God. For clearness' sake, we shall pursue our inquiries along three distinct lines, taking as their points of departure, the status of the individual, the constitution of the family, and the condition of society. For under these three aspects practically the whole moral world is contained.

First then as regards the status of the individual. What was in pre-Christian times the personal condition of men and women in reference to the most essential rights of human beings? What was the individual's recognized worth and value simply as a man? It may sound like exaggeration, yet it is a fact corroborated by the concordant testimony of all ancient history, that the individual as such had practically no legal existence. With the exception of that one small nation, over which God Himself ruled as sovereign Lord, the various peoples of the earth had been reduced to a condition of such absolute slavery that man as man was simply a nonentity. By far the greater part of mankind lived and died in the state of bondage. Nor was this the case only among Oriental nations, where royal despotism

was carried to such lengths that practically every subject was a slave, but even among the freedom loving peoples of the West, where Greece and Rome brought pagan civilization to its greatest perfection. To many an admirer of the past, Athens stands for all that is beautiful, refined, noble and patriotic, yet Thucydides tells us that of its sixty thousand inhabitants, which was the highest number reached in his day, over forty thousand were slaves. In Rome, the greatest military power which the ancient world had ever seen, conditions were in this respect much worse. In fact, slaves were there so numerous that the government was in constant fear lest they should find out their number and in consequence rise in open rebellion against the state. It was worse still in the conquered provinces. Thus of Seneca, who is commonly pointed to as a model pagan gentleman, it is related that he had on his various provincial estates as many as eighty thousand slaves. Other Roman Patricians followed his example, and as a result slavery was necessarily for the many, freedom for the few.

Nor must it be supposed that slavery meant only the loss of personal freedom; it implied the forfeiture of all that distinguishes man from brute creation. In

the pagan world slaves were so absolutely in the power of their owners, that they could be abused, outraged, maltreated and even put to death, according to their master's or mistresses' pleasure. Legally they had no personal right, and hence they could find no redress, no matter to what cruelty and indignities they might be subjected. They were simply regarded as chattels, intended solely for the amusement and profit of their owners. It was a condition of things of which we, with our modern ideas of personal rights, cannot even form a concept. And what is still more incomprehensible, and infinitely more disgraceful to fallen human nature, not only was this a de facto condition of things, but it was approved by the highest authority in the land, and defended by the greatest philosophers of the pagan world. Thus both Aristotle and Plato, whom the present age would fain consider as wonders of wisdom, maintained that slaves had only half a mind, and that, therefore, nature intended them to be the absolute property of their masters. (Aristotle: Polit. c. I. Plato: Dial. VIII. de Legibus.)

What was the practical outcome of this aspect of ancient slavery may easily be divined. Nor yet has history left us to our own conjecture. The most reliable his-

torians have recorded abuses so shocking, that for the honor of humanity they should have buried them in eternal silence. I would not dare even to refer to the moral turpitude that marked the relations of masters and slaves both in the East and in the West. Suffice it to call attention to the physical sufferings which these unfortunates were made to endure on all possible occasions. A thoughtless word, an involuntary movement whilst in attendance on master or mistress, or even the failure to accomplish what lay beyond human strength, was quite sufficient to bring upon them bodily punishment that would have been brutal cruelty if inflicted upon the worst criminals. Moreover on the slightest provocation they were slaughtered like cattle. Vedius Pollio has put it on record that a certain slave, who by accident had broken a glass, was by his master cut up into small pieces, and these were thrown to the fishes to fatten them for that same master's table. Thucydides relates that the Spartans, at a time of political trouble, gathered together their slaves like a herd of sheep and butchered them in cold blood. In Rome, whenever a master was assassinated, all his slaves were put to death, without any regard for age or sex or innocence. Thus, as Tacitus states in his

Annals, when the Prefect Pedanius Secundus was killed by one of his slaves, four hundred innocent men and women were led to the slaughter. And this was not the work of popular fury, but it was solemnly decreed by grave senators, who defended their course of action on the plea that it was an ancient custom, and seemed necessary for the safety of the state. (Ann. I. XIV, 43.)

Nor did persons of higher ranks, who gloried in the title of free men, have any personal rights that need be respected by those who were in authority. It was a time when might was right, and when the weak were entirely at the mercy of the strong. Private individuals were simply so many units in the general aggregate called the state. They had recognized worth and value only in so far as they were of service to the commonwealth. The state was not intended for the good of the citizens, but the citizens for the good of the state. It is largely to this perverted notion of state omnipotence and state absolutism, that must be attributed the almost universal practice of infanticide, as defended and advocated by the greatest philosophers of pagan antiquity. Whenever a child was born deformed, or of a weakly constitution, he might simply be thrown into the

ditch to perish. He was a human being, but what of that? He would be useless to the state, and therefore he had no right to life. In Rome this practice was carried to such lengths that it depended absolutely on the father whether his child should live or die. As soon as a babe was born, it was placed at its father's feet; if he took it up, it was allowed to live; if he turned away from it, it was cast to the dogs. To us it seems incredible that such an atrocious practice should ever have obtained the sanction of the law, yet the ancients looked upon it as perfectly appropriate, because to them the individual was nothing, the state was everything. (Cf. Plato, Rep. V. Aristotle. Polit. VII, 16.)

As the condition of the individual was thus most deplorable in the pagan world, so also was that of the family. Family life as we understand it, in the sense, namely, that every member of the family has his or her well-defined and inalienable rights, had practically no existence in pagan antiquity. There were no doubt many happy homes, as there will always be, even under the worst social conditions, but they were only such by way of gratuitous concessions on the part of the husband, and not in consequence of recognized rights as vested in wife and child.

In the vast majority of countries wife and child had no legal rights; they were absolutely in the power of the head of the family. They were his possessions, his chattels, which he could use or abuse according to his whims. The wife's relations might indeed interfere in her behalf, but if they did so, they must take the law into their own hands and abide by the consequences. Nor was this the case only in the Orient, where woman has always been either a slave or a plaything, but even in Western lands, where as a general rule there was in force a somewhat more equitable distribution of personal rights and privileges. Thus among the Romans, as already stated, when a child was born, even if it were strong and well formed, it depended upon the father whether it should live or die. When the wife committed a fault, her husband was free to punish her according to his own discretion, and if he thought fit to put her to death, even though the fault committed was not of a serious nature, he was legally responsible to no one. In him the duties of husband and father had disappeared in his rights as lord and master.

Nor was this the worst phase of family life as known to the pagan world. There was another aspect which cast upon

the pagan home a much more lurid light. If the husband was so inclined, he could have a plurality of wives, and so convert his home into a harem. Or if he found it more to his taste, he might at any time divorce his lawful wife, send her back to her family, and forthwith enter upon a new matrimonial alliance. Even Cicero, who was in his time the foremost man in Rome, did not blush to put away the companion of his youth and give her place to another woman of whom he had become enamoured. Nor was this merely a de facto condition of things—an evil that was tolerated under stress of adverse circumstances; it was the direct and necessary result of the view which the pagan world took of woman as such. Even among the Greeks, the most refined nation of pagan antiquity, woman was considered to be of a nature essentially lower than man, and therefore incapable of possessing independent rights. It was but the universally accepted view which the poet expressed when he wrote: "The gods gave strength to the lion, wings to the bird, understanding to man, and, as they had nothing else left for woman, they gave her beauty"—no intellect, no will, no virtue; but a certain exterior power to please, which made her the plaything of man's passions.

From this shocking picture of pagan disorders, as found in the life of the individual and of the family, we may readily infer what must have been the normal condition of society in the ancient world. For society is made up of families and individuals, and as the component parts are, such also must be the general aggregate. As the individual was wholly absorbed by the state, there was first of all no room for the spirit of brotherhood, which tended to unite the different nations and peoples of the great human family in the bonds of mutual love and esteem. "Among the Greeks, the Greeks were everything; strangers, barbarians, were nothing." In Rome, the title of Roman citizen made the man; he who wanted it was nothing. As a result states were turned against states, tribes against tribes, and war and bloodshed, pillage and plunder, marked the normal condition of the pagan world. The "Vae victis"—woe to the vanquished—as used by ancient historians has a terrible significance to one who cons their pages. Add to this the fact that even among people of the same nations there was little or no fellow feeling, which might have tended to alleviate the manifold ills of life. Poverty and sufferings, so far from exciting compassion, were almost universally

looked upon as a sign of divine reprobation. What must life have meant in those days of brass, when might was right, when the poor were considered as accursed of the gods, when the crippled and infirm found solace only in death! What is the history of those times but a record of the triumphs of brute force over weakness, of vice over virtue? What is it but the prolonged echo of the slave's dying groan?

Worse still were the moral conditions of society, even among nations the most cultured and refined. Not only were the private lives of all classes of people marked by the most degrading moral corruption, but public morality had sunk to so low an ebb that vice paraded the streets unblushingly in open day. Nay, moral foulness had its legal place even in temples of worship, and unnameable turpitude boasted of its gods and goddesses as special protectors. In spite of recent efforts to bring into prominence the good features of paganism, the fact of pagan corruption in every walk of life is written in characters so large and conspicuous upon the pages of history that he who runs may read. All flesh had indeed corrupted its way, and the ways of men were evil from their youth. Minds and hearts had grown callous through the free indulgence of animal

passion, so much so that religious worship itself found expression in carnal excesses. (Cf. Doellinger, Jew and Gentile.)

What a fearful record the human race, gone astray from its God, established for itself in those days of darkness. Sin! sin! everywhere the ghastly spectacle of sin! And do you think that there was any power on earth that could lift fallen humanity from this degradation, and make of it a race of men and women who would show in their every action that they were made to the image and likeness of the all-holy, all-loving, all-pure God? The pagans themselves knew better, "Only a God" said Plato, "can set the world aright." Only a God, who has power to take away men's heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Only a God, who can take men's thoughts and aspirations, purify and spiritualize them and link them to the throne of their Creator. Only a God, who in the excess of His love and mercy deigns to make sin-stained human nature His own, and robed in that nature walks before His adopted brethren in the way of virtue and holiness, not merely cheering them on by His loving example, but also upholding them in their trials and difficulties by that same hand of almighty power, which in the beginning drew heaven and earth and all

that is in them out of nothingness. He alone can restore all things, and thus renew the face of the earth.

And has He done it? History tells its own story—a story that no one can fail to understand, if he but read it with a heart and mind that is open to the truth. From the manger in the stable at Bethlehem there has shone forth a light, whose brightness shall not fail till the end of time:—and that light is Jesus of Nazareth, "the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and of whose fullness we all have received, grace for grace." Himself the Word, who in the beginning was with God, and who was God, He in time united human nature to Himself in personal union, and thereby impressed upon it a dignity which no external circumstances can take away. Born in poverty and lowliest abjection, He brushed aside all vain distinction arising from wealth and position and thus made the slave in his bonds the peer of the king upon his throne. Bodily advantages He accounted as nothing, but He set forth in bold relief the sublime dignity of man's immortal soul, and as this soul is the same in the lowest as in the highest, He thereby secured the individual in the enjoyment of personal rights which must be respected by all. Claiming each single

human being as His own flesh and blood, He regarded what was done to the least of them as done to Himself. Hence also He said to His Apostles on the eve of His death: "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and they that have power over them, are called beneficent. But you not so; but he that is greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is the leader, as he that serveth" (Luke, XXII, 25, 26).

It was this emphasis placed upon the inalienable rights of man as man, that acted in the first instance as a regenerating principle, whereby society was lifted from the depths of degradation to which it had sunk in pagan times. The moment it became a recognized fact that all men, without exception, were the children of God, brethren of Christ, and heirs of heaven, the ancient system of slavery could no longer be maintained. Although external circumstances made the immediate abolition of servitude impossible, yet such radical changes were introduced that the slave was henceforth regarded as a servant, possessed of well-defined rights, which his master was bound to respect. The authority of the master was no longer an absolute personal prerogative, but the deputed authority of God for the use of which a strict

account was to be given to an all-seeing judge. This point was brought out with special clearness by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who continued the work inaugurated by Christ. He indeed exhorted slaves to obey their masters, but he insisted that this obedience was to be yielded for God's sake, not for man's. And to emphasize the essential equality of master and slave, he immediately added: "And you, masters do the same thing to them, forbearing threatenings, knowing that the Lord both of them and you is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with Him" (Eph. VI, 5, 6).

Nor did this spirit of Christ's divine charity, which at first tended to ameliorate the hard lot of His enslaved brethren, fail to secure for them in due time complete emancipation. Even from the first moment of her existence, the Church of Christ, embodying both His spirit and His means of grace, labored unremittingly in behalf of those whom adverse circumstances had reduced to the condition of servitude. She herself set the example of manumission, that is, of liberating such slaves as for one reason or another had come into her power. And as she did so did many of her faithful children, so that before long every solemn festival was marked by the enfranchise-

ment of hundreds of slaves, who henceforth enjoyed all the rights of free men. Again, in cases where the Church could not obtain freedom for slaves, she took them under her special protection, decreeing the severest penalties against masters who had recourse to mutilation or other modes of punishment prohibited by the laws of the Christian commonwealth. It required centuries of patient endeavor before the evil could be completely eradicated, yet the good work went steadily on ever pushed forward by the spirit of Christ, who died for the bond as well as for the free. If in our own day slavery has practically ceased to exist, it is because the spirit of Christ, enlightening men's minds and softening men's hearts, has finally triumphed. The principle of equality and brotherhood emphasized by the Saviour in all His teaching, and rendered fruitful through His divine influence upon men's souls, has at last found a universal though tardy recognition.

To the same divine influence must be attributed the respect for human life, in all its various phases, which distinguishes Christian society from that of the pagan world. Wherever minds and hearts are opened to Christ's message of truth and love, there human life is sacred; there it is

safeguarded with loving care no matter what burden its conservation may impose upon individuals or upon society. To destroy it by a willful act, or to cause its loss by culpable negligence, constitutes murder, which, as every Christian knows and believes, cries to heaven for vengeance. Nay, not only is human life thus safeguarded, but hundreds and thousands of Christ's followers, animated by His spirit of love and mercy, consecrate themselves and all they have to the relief of the poor and sick and abandoned, accounting it a rare happiness to be allowed to ameliorate by their own sufferings the hard lot of their unfortunate brethren. How the so-called wise men of old would have marveled had they been able to witness the various works of charity carried on in the Christian world! They would have thought it all a poetic dream. of which even their gods could not have effected the realization. Yet it was realized, and realized by the silent but all-powerful influence of the spirit of Christ who in very truth is God.

Equally striking and thorough was the reformation effected by Christ in regard to the family. By restating the original doctrine of marriage, one with one and forever, and then raising the natural contract

to the dignity of a sacrament, He stemmed the awful stream of corruption and tyranny which had completely swept away the home from pagan lands. He placed woman on a footing of essential equality with man, so that husband and wife were to be regarded, not as two, but as one flesh. Henceforth the wife was to be her husband's companion, not his slave; she was to be the mother of his children, not the instrument of his lust. She was to dwell without a rival in her own home; be the sole object of the love and affections of her husband, and have the most solemn and sacred assurance of his fidelity in prosperity and misfortune, in health and in sickness, even until their parting in death.

This high ideal of Christian marriage, so solemnly proposed to the astonished world by the Saviour of mankind, has found its realization among all peoples who have accepted Christ as their Redeemer and their God. The Apostles and disciples, whom Christ commissioned and empowered to carry on His divine work of reform, impressed upon their converts the necessity of modeling their homes upon that of the God-man, where love and purity and reverence dwelt as the guardian angels of the hearthstone. They told the Christian husband that he must love his wife even as

Christ loved His Church, and the Christian wife that she must be subject to her husband, as the Church also is subject to Christ. St. Paul put this very strikingly in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he says: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it. . . .So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the church, because we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church." (V. 25-32.)

In keeping with this doctrine, and upheld in her struggles by Christ's never failing assistance, the Church ever watched with loving care over all that concerned the welfare of the family. She surrounded the contracting of the marriage-bond with the most impressive religious ceremonies, so that bride and bridegroom might carry home with them the firm conviction that their union was holy even as the union of Christ with His Church. She placed her sacred seal upon the union thus effected,

and that seal no power on earth could break. Kings and potentates, in the pride of their power, demanded at times concessions to human weakness, yet her answer ever was: Non possumus—we cannot:—what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. She pointed to the little home at Nazareth, the home of the God-Man, and told her children to model their homes upon that divine pattern. It was through her influence, directed and made effective by the presence of her divine Founder, that Christian marriage remained what Christ had made it:—a holy and indissoluble union, the source of peace and happiness, the heaven-blessed nursery of men and women whose lives of purity and holiness would have been to the ancient world a standing miracle.

What Christ thus effected in behalf of the individual and the family, He extended to human society in all its various relations and aspects. By making human nature His own, He broke down the barriers which had till then divided nation from nation, and class from class: He implanted in the human heart the seeds of universal charity, and thus made the whole world feel akin. The prophet had announced Him as the Prince of Peace, and peace He brought to all, such as the world

cannot give. In this spirit the Apostle of the Gentiles wrote to his converts from Paganism: "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free. For you are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." A new commandment was given to the world, the commandment of brotherly love; and this, together with the love of God, comprised the whole law. Christ did not discourage in His followers love of country, and patriotic devotion to the land of their birth; but this love and devotion He subordinated to the spirit of universal brotherhood, which made the broad earth the common country of all.

This same spirit brought together the different classes of society, and made the interests of one the interests of all. "See how they love one another!" said the pagans of old, when they saw the Christians so perfectly united that they seemed to have but one heart and one soul. Again with Christ's blessing upon the poor, the meek and the clean of heart, social intercourse was placed upon the solid basis of supernatural motives, and thus of its very nature tended to peace and concord, and to the furtherance of public morality. The social conscience was awakened, and branded as heinous crimes what the pagan world had regarded as a matter of indiffer-

ence. Human passions indeed remained what they had ever been, and they all too often broke out into open rebellion; yet the gentle and pure spirit of Christ never failed to reassert its influence and enkindle afresh in the hearts of men and women the love of Christian virtue.

A still more special remedy did Christ apply to the fearful corruption of morals which so disgraced the ancient world. In pagan times men and women were impure, not simply because their passions were strong, but because they had ceased to love purity; they had flung aside this fairest of jewels as a thing without value. Christ took that discarded jewel, placed it as the brightest gem in the crown of His own sweet mother, and so made it an object of love and admiration. It was only when this virtue received its consecration in the virgin mother of God, that men and women opened their eyes to its surpassing beauty. It is to her example and the all-powerful grace of Christ that we owe those fair flowers of Christian purity—a St. Agnes, a St. Aloysius, and countless others, whose names shine like gems upon every page of modern history. Christ made her the Queen of virgins and around her regal throne He has gathered a countless host of youths and maidens, who have

gladly sacrificed all that a flattering world could offer to wealth and wit and beauty, in order to purchase this pearl of great price. As beheld in the soft radiance shed upon it by the virgin mother of Christ, this fairest of virtues has again become an object of love to men and women who had almost forgotten its meaning. Even where the courage to practice purity is wanting, the love of it still lingers, and this love is the special gift of the God-Man, made more beautiful and fair as presented to us by His own sweet mother.

Thus in every respect has Christ renewed the face of the earth. As at the beginning of time, the Spirit of God moved over the waters and called forth the light and life of the new-made world, so did the Spirit of Christ move over the waters of pagan corruption and imparted to the world grown old in sin new light and life, which shall not wholly fail until the end of time. It is true, indeed, that there is much in the Christian world to-day that is evil:—the poor are the slaves of the rich, homes are broken up by our divorce courts, private and public morality has again sunk to a low ebb; but that is because men and women, fathers and mothers, have of their own free choice and against their better judgment gone astray from Christ. Christ

had power to call a dead world into life, and He has power to sustain that life which He has once given; but He will not do so when the men refuse to make use of the means which he has placed at their disposal. When men and women make of marriage "a merely worldly thing," how can they expect the blessing of Christ upon their wedded life? When fathers and mothers allow their children to grow up without religion, how can they expect the blessing of Christ upon their families? When rich and poor repudiate the price of their redemption and seek their happiness in the things of sense, how can they expect the blessing of Christ upon society. Christ is as powerful now as He was in the days of old, but none can profit by His power except they be men of good will. He has indeed come to save what was lost, but when men refuse to be saved, they frustrate His beneficent designs, and they perish, not on account of Christ's weakness, but through their own perversity.

Hence if we take facts as they are, and not such as they are represented to be in order to fit a theory, we may well say that Christ has wrought a truly divine reformation. He has proved himself to be in very truth the "light of the world". He rose as a star out of Jacob, and poured out the

fullness of His light upon the nations that dwelt in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death. The world has received of His light, and has remained dark only where it has wilfully shut out its brightness, although that brightness could not be shut out completely. Christ is the central figure of the world's history. The four thousand years of hope which preceded His coming found in Him their fulfillment; the centuries that have passed since His humble birth in the stable of Bethlehem drew from Him their life and inspiration. For Him the ancient world longed and yearned as its only hope; to Him the modern world must ever look back as the source of all its blessings. With Christ the God-Man, as the Redeemer of a fallen race, the world's history has a meaning; without Him, or without His divine mission as Saviour of mankind, that same history is an unintelligible riddle. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of man's hopes and joys for time and for eternity.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: July 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

BT215

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 014 478 766 3